LORD OF THE MYSTERIES

by Cuttlefish That Loves Diving

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LORD OF THE MYSTERIES

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- BOOK 10 -

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CHAPTER 901
THE MUTATED PAPER FIGURINE

Klein didn't bring Azik's copper whistle directly above the gray fog this time, but he did plan on doing it the same way he did back when he first divined the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem. He completed it by using an object's projection. Although this would decrease the accuracy to a certain extent, causing the divination to fail at obtaining any effective revelation, it guaranteed that the item was undamaged thanks to the gray fog being an intermediary layer.

He still recalled the time back when he divined the origins of the black ear that came from the Listener. This Sealed Artifact had suffered retaliation from the True Creator, causing it to crumble and reform into a charm.

Therefore, with the suspicion that the divination result could point to Death's corpse or other remains, a godhood power of a Sequence 0 that had long perished but was still capable of changing the Berserk Sea's environment, Klein decided to leave Azik's copper whistle in the real world and divine using a projection. This was to avoid the possibility of damaging such an important item. After all, Death and the True Creator were at the same level!

As for why Klein dared to directly use Groselle's Travels to divine its origins, it was because the ancient god, Dragon of Imagination, had long since perished. Its corresponding characteristic had likely been inherited by someone else and changed hands several times. Furthermore, the book itself was extremely strong. Even a blast of the Sea God Scepter at full strength could hardly damage it. By the same logic, Mr. Door was likely only a King

of Angels and was in an exiled and quarantined state. He could only barely send out his ravings, making it impossible for him to deal any actual damage.

With the help of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, I can quickly recover from the damage and corruption without any lasting repercussions. If Azik's copper whistle were to be destroyed, it would truly be gone. I wouldn't be able to contact Mr. Azik again and use it to attract the undead. I won't even be able to carry it around with me… Klein very calmly and skillfully held the copper whistle's projection and the paper with the divination statement in hand before leaning back into his chair. Half-closing his eyes, he chanted softly in a state of Cogitation, "The reason for this copper whistle's abnormality today."

After chanting it seven times, Klein fell into a deep sleep and entered the dream world.

After an unknown period of time, he saw a dark and gloomy mausoleum. He saw a dark-colored staircase that extended downwards and coffins placed around it.

The coffins were all open with dead bodies in them. On their backs grew white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

Even in the dream, Klein found the scene abnormally familiar, as though he had once seen it before.

At that moment, he seemed to smell the putrid smell of rot and hear the slow breathing of some object. He felt that the darkness in the mausoleum was thickening, giving him an acute feeling of deathly silence.

Suddenly, ravings that were both loud and soft sounded at the same time. The corpses in the coffins with white feathers on their backs floated up together, and using their half-rotten and half-pale faces, they looked out of the dream!

With his heart skipping a beat, Klein lost control of his heart, as though it was grabbed by invisible hands and was ripped straight out of his chest.

During this process, his dream collapsed into fragments as it returned to nothingness.

And the final scene Klein saw was that, not only were the corpses growing white feathers on their backs and other parts of their body, there were thin illusory black tubes that stabbed into their bodies. They extended deep into the mausoleum where an endless cold, sinister, black fog emanated.

The black fog slowly contracted and expanded, producing panting sounds. When the commotion from this scene landed in Klein's eyes and ears, the color in his skin rapidly drained. It left his skin rotting and overflowing with pus. It made his pores produce thin and dense white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil. It made the projection of Azik's copper whistle in his hand shatter into a blob of black fog.

The long mottled table in the ancient palace rotted and collapsed as the twenty-two high-back chairs were enveloped by white feathers as though they had a life of their own.

Seeing the endless gray fog silently churn, the mysterious space above this gently stirred, quickly restoring everything to normal. It was as though nothing had happened.

Klein, who had collapsed to the side of the chair, reached out his hand and grabbed the table leg and slowly stood up. Sitting back in his chair, he exhaled slowly.

He rubbed his temples and subconsciously did a comparison.

Weaker than the True Creator and Eternal Blazing Sun, but stronger than Mr. Door. However, I'm not sure if it's because the latter was exiled and quarantined which minimized the amount of power transmitted over.

Why am I thinking about these comparisons? It's not like I'm their match. It will still be the same even if I become a demigod…

Unfortunately, I didn't directly see the object hidden in the black fog; otherwise, I might be able to obtain some potion formulas or mysticism knowledge.

Klein felt a baffling sense of regret as he cast his gaze to the side of his chair. He saw an illusory black fog floating there.

It was the remnants after the shattering of the projection of Azik's copper whistle.

There's no sensation of strength, which means it can't be used as a charm. What is its use? Klein thought of something else as he summoned a backup Paper Angel from his junk pile and cast it onto the illusory black fog.

The moment the two made contact, they immediately fused together. The paper figurine quickly turned black and appeared serene and quiet. On its back grew white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

Such a change was only maintained for a second. The paper figurine returned to its original state, but it didn't seem corporeal, as though it was half-illusory.

Apart from that, there were feather-like patterns that covered the paper figurine's back.

What can this be used for? Klein made the mutated paper figurine land back in his palm.

He didn't dare to use divination to determine its effects, afraid to see the scene from his dream before, allowing the now prepared object from deep inside the black fog to invade where he was.

After repeated checks, Klein used his knowledge in mysticism to determine something.

This doesn't contain any powers itself, but it's substantially unique. Perhaps it can create special effects that are related to the undead domain when used as a Paper Figurine Substitute or Paper Angel.

It's like my adventurer's harmonica. Although it doesn't contain any strength, it can summon a messenger with great strength…

Klein immediately put away the mutated paper figurine and began interpreting the scene from his dream.

Black mausoleum, open coffins, corpses with feathers on their back, black fog emanating deep inside. These revelations seem to point towards Death or something important that Death left behind… Or perhaps it's a certain product of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death?

Right, why did I find what I saw familiar?

Klein carefully recalled and quickly found an answer.

He had seen a similar scene in a particular divination a long time ago!

That time, the contents of his divination was the result of hiding matters related to Mr. Azik from the Nighthawks!

Back then, he had seen two scenes in his dream. One was of himself falling into a sea of blood and being pulled out by Azik. The other was them finding themselves in a dark and gloomy mausoleum, looking as though they were searching for something!

Klein had once tried interpreting it, believing that the first scene represented him in danger and being rescued by Mr. Azik. The second scene represented them exploring a mausoleum or somewhere that symbolized a mausoleum together.

The former had been verified during the meteor that came falling from the skies in Backlund. The latter finally revealed clues today!

Could it be that the place that Mr. Azik and I will be exploring is the mausoleum that I just "saw"? But, this mausoleum is very dangerous. The object in the deepest part of the black fog has a very high level. It's only slightly weaker than true deities. Furthermore, it's filled with malevolence… Klein knitted his brows bit by bit, believing that their exploration together wasn't naturally a good thing.

This made him believe that it was necessary for him to stop Mr. Azik. However, he also suspected that the divination scene he saw couldn't be avoided. Otherwise, a worse outcome would happen in a dramatic way of having destiny unfold.

At least during my first divination, there was only the exploration scene and no appearance of danger… Perhaps there's a way to circumvent it… This might be why Seers are often so vague. At times, being too clear might backfire! Klein planned on vaguely mentioning his dream without providing any interpretation when he met Mr. Azik again and allowing him to share his views.

After making up his mind, Klein leaned back and looked at the dome of the magnificent palace before vanishing from above the gray fog.

…

Light—shattered light and the pure light of dawn—emitted from the Elder of the six-member council, the other Demon Hunter, Waite Chirmont's body. It dissolved the white feathers that grew out of the pores of his skin as he suppressed the subsequent squirming of his flesh and blood.

His arm muscles swelled as he pulled the bowstring of the Dragon Slaying Bow, allowing silver electric bolts and the dawn of light to mesh into a dazzling arrow.

The arrow flew out and instantly reached the altar which was piled with monster skulls. It hit the heavy, iron-black coffin.

Silently, the arrow's beam dimmed and vanished without leaving any effect.

No, the area around the altar was turning darker and more gloomy!

Inside the iron-black coffin, a sound that resembled bones rubbing against each other sounded:

"Why? Why are you disturbing my slumber?"

Upon hearing this, Waite's heart instantly became heavy. This was because there was no hint of hiding its malevolent intent, and that it also meant that the former Chief might've transformed into a monster.

The City of Silver's attempt at salvation had once again failed.

With a bang, the coffin's lid flew up and shattered into pieces. A large wave of black fog emanated out from beneath in an incessant manner.

Amidst this scene, Waite saw a figure slowly stand up from within the coffin. He was nearly four meters tall and his limbs were long. His body was covered in white feathers that were tainted with faint yellow oil. Behind his back were thin illusory black tubes that connected out into infinity.

Behind the three members of the six-member council, a huge wave stirred in the pitch-black river. All sorts of arms, tentacles, and veins surged over.

At this moment, Waite saw the Chief's body transform rapidly and saw his bulging muscles tears his clothes inch by inch.

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CHAPTER 902
SHADOW

In just a blink of an eye, Colin Iliad had transformed into a four-meter-tall giant. His skin was bluish-black and muscular. Every inch of his skin, pores, and flesh seemed to violate the normal confines of a human body. It was a unique combination that possessed an unimaginable shock factor.

This wasn't something that could be described superficially or in dimensions, as apart from quantitative terms like length, breadth, height, there was information, strength, and spirituality as measurement quantities. They were directly presented and seemed to be rich with complicated mystical patterns, symbols, and labels. But in fact, there wasn't any change. The former was just a partial image that humans received due to them lacking the ability to sense and discern him. But even so, to face such a creature directly, humans without any godhood would still be corrupted by the spirituality, having their minds thrashed. A common outcome would either be death on the spot or going completely mad.

And it was precisely due to this fact that this creature was known in mysticism as: Mythical Creature!

However, at that moment, Colin Iliad's head didn't experience any obvious changes. All it did was swell up significantly, and the area from his forehead to nose cracked open with a black vertical eye-like rift.

Before reaching Sequence 2, the Mythical Creature form of a demigod was incomplete!

Faced with a powerhouse of this level, the advantages and disadvantages of taking such a form was obvious. On the one hand, this enhanced one's

strength and level significantly. On the other hand, it would result in intense madness and provide strong inclinations towards losing control. It was a nontrivial test of one's rationality. It wasn't something those with insufficient willpower could withstand.

Therefore, most saints would consider transforming into an incomplete Mythical Creature only if they were forced into a corner. And it wouldn't just be the transformation of a particular part of their bodies. To them, such an action was an attempt at dancing on the edge of a knife. It easily led to a loss of control; therefore, caution was imperative.

Most of the time, there were two extremes. One extreme was the minority who indulged in their desires and expressed their evil side fully. The other was the kind who had extremely strong willpower and a resilient mind. Once the former produced the Mythical Creature form, it was equivalent to them losing control with no way of transforming back. The latter could use their Mythical Creature form as a rather normal battle tactic, without the fear of losing control and the threat of madness. Of course, something rather normal wasn't normal. It still wasn't something that could be used frequently. This was because, for people who danced at the edge of the abyss, they would only deepen the erosion on them with each attempt. It wasn't something that could be completely avoided just because they could handle the negative effects.

Among the City of Silver's six-member council, Chief Colin Iliad was one of the few who could control his Mythical Creature form as a Demon Hunter.

He held the two swords that were slathered with different ointments. Just taking a step forward with his right foot sent the land shaking as he leaped up towards the top of the altar. He then pounced towards the former Chief whose body was covered in white feathers.

His giant-like body's interior and exterior produced dawnlike light that scattered the surrounding darkness, purifying the harrowing creatures that were in the illusionary river behind them.

At the same time, Waite Chirmont kept drawing his Dragon Slaying Bow, strafing around the former Chief that had transformed into an unknown monster with blinding silver lightning arrows.

Lovia had already closed her eyes. The five-meter-tall silver-armored knight behind her had phased away. Dragging the illusory greatsword, it charged straight at the altar, producing cracks that overflowed with silver light.

In addition to that, at the Shepherd Elder's feet, the shadows that curled into a bundle suddenly began squirming as though they had come to life.

It quickly left Lovia, and amidst the environment intermixing with darkness and the dawn, it followed the eeriness and quickly headed for the iron-black coffin above the altar.

However, its target didn't seem to be the mutated former Chief, but the thin illusory black tubes that were stabbed into his body while extending into infinity!

…

Moments after Klein returned to the real world, he heard the loud sounds of waves crashing. He heard the prostitutes on the streets screaming in horror without any signs of calming down.

Slightly surprised, he walked to the window and, through the gap of two messily built buildings, saw lead-colored clouds stacked together as waves swarmed the area beyond Poto Harbor. A black hurricane extended from the surface of the sea to the air, tainted with dark silver lightning as it silently destroyed everything.

It was like a door that led to the apocalypse had finally been opened.

And inside the port city, the void had turned translucent. Skulls with open mouths, vines with baby faces, bloody arms, and strange slimy tentacles

with teeth were slamming at the boundary between the illusory and reality. It was thrilling and horrendous.

This made many pirates tremble in the knees as they didn't dare stay on the streets. All of them rushed into nearby buildings.

The seemingly invisible wraiths and shadows flew around, appearing from time to time. Coming close to the ears of different targets, they attempted to scream but were unable to make contact.

At that moment, Poto Harbor seemed to fall into the hell known as the Underworld. It was eerie, dark, chaotic, and crazy.

Klein frowned slightly, having had a guess as to what was happening.

Back when he made a divination above the gray fog, it angered the object deep in the gloomy mausoleum. It then unleashed its temper, changing the weather of the Berserk Sea and Poto Harbor, creating the phenomena of the Underworld's descent.

This also means that the mausoleum is indeed concealed somewhere in the Berserk Sea… It's probably something that Death left back then. Of course, this might not be at odds with the product of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project. The two might be fused together… Klein retracted his gaze and quickly set up a ritual and sacrificed Azik's copper whistle to the mysterious space above the gray fog. It was to prevent the unknown, strange, and evil object from locking onto him.

After doing that, he looked out of the window at the abnormality that was gradually calming down. He said with a self-deprecating laugh, *That's such an endearing welcome.*

Hmm… The Numinous Episcopate will definitely notice the abnormality of the Berserk Sea. I wonder what actions they will take…

…

Above the illusory pitch-black river, the waves slowly calmed down. The arms, vines, and tentacles that attempted to grab at something were either vaporized or had no choice but to retract themselves.

Around the altar, the land was already covered in cracks. There were white feathers stained with yellow oil everywhere.

Colin Iliad, in his giant form, had stabbed both swords into the former Chief's body, pinning the rotting monster that wasn't shorter than him onto the collapsed altar. Waite Chirmont's Dragon Slaying Bow had already condensed a silver arrow of light that was filled with a wrathful aura, aiming it at the head of the former Chief which only had tiny pieces of flesh hanging off it.

The shadow that Lovia had produced had successfully arrived at the altar under the silver knight's cover. While the other two Elders weren't paying attention, the shadow leaped and pounced at the black tubes that extended into infinity from the former Chief's body.

With the incorporeal tubes approaching, the shadow's color darkened. The blackness seemed to embody the most corrupt and evil thoughts of humanity.

At this moment, a deep voice resounded around the altar:

"Fate."

The area "in front" of the shadow instantly darkened before realizing that it had pounced on the giant-like Colin Iliad.

Colin looked down at it, his eyes lit with a pure brilliance.

It was like the first sliver of light that illuminates the darkness on an extended night.

The light grew brighter as it blasted out of the mausoleum, causing the basement of the City of Silver's spire to produce an even brighter and dazzling light that met with it.

When the two met in midair, they fell back down, landing upon Colin Iliad's massive body. The pitch-black shadow evaporated with a sizzle, and the distortion and squirming weakened until they completely vanished.

Demon Hunter Colin turned back to glance at Lovia without a word or expression. It was as though nothing had happened.

He quickly retracted his gaze and directed the remnant beam straight into the former Chief's dual swords.

Lovia stood there with her eyes closed without showing any signs of panic or fear. Instead, she slowly sighed.

…

In the City of Generosity Bayam, Alger Wilson circled around many times in order to escape any imaginary trackers or monitors before arriving at the Artisan's residence. He pulled the doorbell.

He had heard that the Artisan had recently been infected by a disease and strange snoopers had appeared in the vicinity. Alger's first suspicion was the Demoness Sect, but on careful thought, he felt that the Artisan had no way to withstand the temptation of their charm based on his preferences. There was no need for the Demonesses to go through such a complicated and roundabout manner. All they needed to do was curl their fingers and showcase their charm, and he would divulge and agree to everything.

Therefore, Alger believed that there was another reason for the matter. He needed to see it for himself to prevent the delivery of the mystical item from being delayed. He didn't wish to lose the characteristic and materials for no good reason.

Amidst the ringing of the doorbell, the Artisan's main door opened. A thin and tanned middle-aged glanced at Alger and said, "Why are you here?"

This person was none other than Artisan Cielf who had worked with Alger for many years. His background was unknown.

"Didn't you say you were sick?" Alger asked, seemingly casual.

Cielf yawned and said, "I'm already better."

Alger was taken aback as he looked around.

"Where's that strange snooper?"

Cielf's eyebags were a little puffy as his brown eyes revealed looks of fatigue and impatience.

"Who the hell knows? There's been no sign of the snooper anyway. In short, I'll be moving soon. It's too dangerous here."

Alger heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's good."

He paused for a moment before saying, "Aren't you inviting me for a cup?"

"A fellow like you who only seeks high-proof alcohol has no way of appreciating fine wine." Cielf pulled at his flaxen-colored hair and moved to the side to make way.

Alger walked in staidly, and with just one glance, he had taken in the entire area into his eyes.

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CHAPTER 903
SCHOLAR-TYPE BISHOP

Cielf's residence wasn't messy and dirty like most bachelors. Things were placed neatly, and there wasn't any dust on any surfaces. After all, as an Artisan, he didn't lack money. Many of his actions simply had the necessity that secrets were kept, so it wasn't convenient for him to hire a large number of fixed servants. Therefore, he had no choice but to hire help who were paid by the hour.

Scanning the area, Alger discovered nothing that was off from his previous visit. The furnishing was extremely simple without any expensive ornaments, oil paintings, or sculptures. It resembled the residence of an ordinary person.

Of course, Alger knew very well that Cielf definitely deserved the title of being a tycoon. He just didn't care about putting on a so-called decent image. He was willing to spend hundreds of pounds for a bottle of limited-edition wine, or gift a mistress a house, but he would never waste a single pence on expensive carpets, porcelain, gold-inlaid cutlery, or paintings of famous artists.

"A cup of Sonia blood wine." Alger's expression remained unchanged, but his verbal and body language indicated that he was coming in simply to get a free cup of wine.

Cielf shrugged and said, "You should feel lucky. I don't have the habit of keeping Lanti Proof."

He walked to the tiny bar counter in the living room and took out a bottle of exquisite Sonia blood wine. He then overturned two cups.

Finding a sofa to sit down, Alger took the opportunity to raise his hand to massage his neck as though to relieve any discomfort in his neck.

Using the cover of this action, he naturally took a glance at his surroundings, quickly making an observation of all the spots where he hadn't been able to see previously.

As Cielf couldn't be bothered to decorate his residence much, Alger quickly completed his attempt as his gaze was fixed onto a glass window of a cupboard a distance away for a second.

Through the glass, he saw some dried grass and flowers.

There were red-rimmed flowers, blood moon flowers, and monkey-faced tree leaves. Their common characteristic was that they were common in the Southern Continent, but they were practically not seen in the Northern Continent.

Alger retracted his gaze as he silently watched Cielf carry the bottle of wine and wine glasses over.

Reaching out to take the glass, he began idly chatting about the recent developments at sea until the small half-filled bottle of Sonia blood wine was finished.

Upon seeing this, Alger smiled and bade farewell before leaving.

Five minutes after he left, Cielf who had silently sat down to indulge in his tipsy experience suddenly stood up, walked to the staircase, and opened a wooden door that led to the cellar.

"Did he suspect anything?"

"No."

"Regardless, this place is no longer suitable for you to live in. You need to move away as soon as possible."

"I still have certain commissions that I haven't completed."

"You don't have to. It's not like you will contact them again. You will receive a new life."

"Alright."

…

Two buildings away, Alger sat on a long bench in someone's garden, cupping his right hand to his ear as he heard the conversation that came with the wind.

…

West Balam, Behrens Harbor. Outside a seemingly ordinary house.

"It's really due to your bad relationship with the Church of Knowledge that you're egging me on to come here to request for a Language Comprehension charm?" Danitz wiped the sweat from his forehead as he looked at Anderson, feeling unnerved.

Anderson said in a self-deprecating and unfazed manner, "You shouldn't describe it as bad…”

"Then hostile?" Danitz blurted out, cutting off his sentence.

Anderson shot him a glance and said, "The negative effects of your boxing glove might not be as easily bearable as you imagine it to be."

He paused and added with a chuckle, "A more accurate description is that: be it me or the people from the Church of Knowledge, neither one of us wishes to interact with one another."

Danitz used one hand to clench his boxing glove and said, seemingly stumped, "But how should I request for the charm?

"Do I just head straight to a clergyman of the Church of an orthodox god and mention something about mysticism? I'll end up locked up!"

Danitz was somewhat rash at the moment, but he was in no way dumb.

Anderson threw up his hands.

"Simple, just directly mention my name. Then indicate that you came to West Balam for some pressing matter and do not have the time to learn Dutanese, nor do you dare to hire a local interpreter. Therefore, all you could do was seek their help, hoping that you could receive a few Language Comprehension charms.

"During this process, you must showcase your knowledge of many Northern Continent languages, making the priests know that it's not that you lack the ability to learn Dutanese, but that you just lack the time to do it. Then, they will test you. When that happens, all you need to do is get a good score and you'll receive the charms."

*Test… *Upon hearing this familiar term, Danitz's temples throbbed as he forced a smile.

"You aren't going yourself because you're afraid of the tests, aren't you?"

His original intent was to randomly use some words to conceal his discomfort, but he ended up seeing Anderson's expression freeze.

From the looks of it, there's still something you're afraid of… Danitz chortled inwardly as he was suddenly filled with confidence.

He took large strides into the ordinary house and discovered that its interior was more of an amalgamation of classrooms, and not a land of preaching for the Church of Knowledge in Balam.

Then, he saw a grizzled elder.

Although this man wasn't wearing the clergyman robes of the Church of Knowledge, just his unique scholarly air convinced Danitz that he was at least a bishop.

He had experienced similar vibes from his captain.

"Hello there." Without covering himself with a hood, Danitz walked over with a smile while dressed in a commoner's attire.

The elder silently watched him approach before slowly saying, "Danitz."

"…”

Danitz paused and froze on the spot. His mind was filled with questions like: "He knows me?" "How does he know me?" "Isn't my bounty only limited to the sea?"

The elder glanced at him and asked, "You are here for Language Comprehension charms?"

"Yes…” Danitz nodded with a blank look, suddenly having the feeling that he had zero secrets in front of the elder.

The scholarly old gentleman nodded gently.

"Are you planning on heading to the places ruled by Katamia and Maysanchez?"

"Yes." Danitz continued his blank expression.

The elder took out four brass charms from his pocket.

"These can be used for two months. They should be enough."

"…”

Danitz received it with a blank look and after a few seconds, said, "That's it?"

It's that simple?

Isn't there supposed to be a test?

"You don't want it?" the scholarly elder asked with a smile.

"No, it's not that!" Danitz suddenly shook his head, and before his brain could react, he had already asked, "How do you know me? How do you know I want Language Comprehension charms?"

The elder wore a few looks of pity in his eyes as he slowly said, "Your captain contacted me.

"She said that you refused to stop no matter how much they called out to you when you left the ship, rushing straight into the harbor. She had actually prepared a few Language Comprehension charms for you."

As he spoke, the man shook his head, the look in his eyes somewhat ambivalent. It was as though he was looking at a student who was often careless in class.

…I should've long realized that. Captain is such a meticulous person. It's impossible for her not to consider the problem of the language barrier… Danitz resisted the urge to slap himself.

When the elder saw the changes in Danitz's expression, he shook his head and asked, "It probably wasn't your own idea to seek help here, right? I was about to use divination to find you."

"Ah, right. It was suggested by Anderson Hood," Danitz immediately replied.

The elder was taken aback for a second before his expression turned ashen.

At that moment, Anderson was sitting outside in the shade. He had snapped a tree branch and was casually drawing on a barren patch among the grass as he leisurely waited for Danitz to come out.

He had no doubts that this unqualified Hunter could obtain the Language Comprehension charms. This was because, as long as Danitz mentioned Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina, everything would become much simpler. The only difference was how many rounds of tests he needed to take.

Just as he finished drawing King of the North Ulyssan's head, he heard a familiar gait coming from the inside.

Anderson's branch-wielding hand paused for a second when he looked up and turned to the door. He saw Danitz holding a stack of paper, walking over with mixed emotions.

"You… failed the test?" Anderson gave a sincere smile, having zero concern over the failure to obtain the Language Comprehension charms.

Danitz shook his head blankly.

"There wasn't a test."

"…”

Anderson was first taken aback as he asked with immediate enlightenment, "Help from your captain?"

Danitz tersely confirmed it as he handed the stack of paper to Anderson and said, "This is what the bishop wishes me to inform you: 'A real Hunter doesn't only rely on instinct or solely focus on the prey's information. They also need to learn how to grasp the prey's psyche and use all kinds of additional information.'

"This is the information he wants to give you."

Anderson's expression became contorted for a brief moment before it was restored to normal. He chuckled and said, "Thankfully, that's not much."

Danitz's lips quivered as he finally held back the laughter that rose within him. He said with seriousness, "That's only the table of contents.

"That bishop said that you should try to finish reading all the books mentioned in it within two years."

Anderson's smile finally froze.

…

Desi Bay, Eskelson Harbor.

Klein was like any normal Southern Continent tourist. He bought tickets to East Balam, boarded a hybrid steam and sail liner with many cannons.

With a hum, the ship left the harbor and quickly entered the Berserk Sea.

Midway, Klein discovered the Loen Kingdom's Desi fleet patrolling the safe sea route as though they were guarding against something.

From the looks of it, the abnormality in the Berserk Sea has garnered the attention of the Loen military… This way, the Numinous Episcopate likely has no way of investigating these waters without problems. Of course, a fleet is unable to monitor the entire stretch of the sea route… Klein stood inside his cabin as he looked at the scenery outside, thinking in enlightenment and poignancy.

At this moment, he heard stacked illusory pleas. He hurriedly headed above the gray fog to check on it.

The prayer was from The Hanged Man. He requested Mr. Fool to inform The Hermit that the Artisan was suspected to be controlled by a cult or secret organization and that he wished to receive some help from her.

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CHAPTER 904
ANALYSIS

The Artisan is suspected to be under the control of a cult or secret organization? Yet, he's trying to get The Hermit's help? Just get The World! Who knows which waters the Future is in at the moment and how long it would take to reach there. What's more, The World can Teleport! After hearing The Hanged Man's prayers, Klein subconsciously rebutted his request, believing that it would delay an opportunity, causing unnecessary losses.

He then calmed down, believing that with Mr. Hanged Man's attention to detail and experience, it was impossible for him to commit such a simple error. Since he believed that he definitely had his reasons for requesting The Hermit's help instead of The World.

This also means that Mr. Hanged Man has determined that the matter hasn't reached a critical state that requires immediate action. He even wishes to observe further to find more clues and details… Besides, since Ma'am Hermit had offered to provide help in advance, it means that she believes that, for the time being, her region of activity would overlap with Mr. Hanged Man's. If anything really happens, she would be able to rush there at the fastest speed possible… Or does she too have powers similar to Teleport? But that's a very low possibility… Klein tapped the edges of the mottled table, believing that he should trust Mr. Hanged Man's experience.

Of course, this also included the fact that Mr. Hanged Man hadn't described in detail about his discoveries or areas of suspicion, preventing him from inferring or divining the truth of the matter.

As his thoughts stirred, Klein threw The Hanged Man's prayer scene into the crimson star representing The Hermit.

As he was waiting for Admiral of Stars to reply, he suddenly saw the star representing The Sun suddenly contract and expand as it produced stacked layers of prayers.

*The City of Silver's exploration of the former Chief's mausoleum has some preliminary results? *Klein made a guess as he emanated his spirituality over.

In accordance with his expectations, Little Sun began recounting everything that had happened after the three members of the six-member council opened the former Chief's mausoleum. This included encountering the souls of their deceased relatives, the river they crossed which hid countless strange creatures, and how they faced the incomplete Mythical Creature form of the former Chief whose body was covered in white feathers. It also included Shepherd Lovia's separation of a shadow in an attempt to pounce onto the illusory tubes that extended out of the former Chief's body. However, she was stopped when Colin Iliad used the Fate Siphon charm, swapping his and the former Chief's fate for a brief moment, causing a difference in outcomes.

Thin illusory black tubes… White feathers stained with pale yellow oil… This sounds familiar… Yes, wasn't this the main characteristic in the scene I saw when I divined the abnormality with Azik's copper whistle? And the reason that former Chief built the mausoleum was to switch to Sequence 3 Ferryman of the Death pathway… As Klein listened, his mind raced, joining the dots together and considering what kind of conclusion he could receive from that.

Soon, he had a bold guess:

The mutation of the City of Silver's former Chief had a certain connection with the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project!

Although this conclusion sounded inexplicable and unbelievable since the City of Silver was situated in the completed isolated Forsaken Land of the Gods, It was a place that could only be entered through certain means via the Giant King's Court and ruins of the battle of the gods. Even the seven deities couldn't find it or have the power to infiltrate it. However, the numerous similarities made Klein, who was sensitive to coincidences, combine the actions of Shepherd Elder Lovia in the operation and eliminate the other possibilities so as to seriously consider what the two seemingly unconnected matters might possibly point towards.

From the scene that he received from divination and the experiences of having white feather grow from the pores of the back of his hands when he summoned the failed product of Artificial Death, as well as the encounter of the three City of Silver Elders, he began suspecting that the Numinous Episcopate's attempt might have achieved success to a certain degree.

Through a series of sacrificial rituals and the transformation of their own High-Sequence Beyonders, they influenced Death's remains via backward propagation, causing that abstract, illusory Uniqueness which represented a deity's authority to generate some form of sentience. This allowed the object that was only a totem and a concept to come to life!

Hence, this unintelligent object that couldn't be considered Artificial Death had begun assimilating the entire ritual, eagerly exerting its influence on lower Sequence Beyonders of the same pathway.

After reaching certain conditions, the object hidden in the depths of the black fog could extend thin illusory black tubes, establishing connections with the target, and draw upon their strength to transform their bodies.

And this method might involve the Underworld or something special about Death's domain. It could circumvent the force that isolated the Forsaken Land of the Gods and make effective contact with the beings within!

Therefore, the shadow that Shepherd Elder Lovia had produced was a bestowment of the True Creator. Its goal was to follow the thin illusory

black tubes on the former Chief's body and trace the remains of the corrupted Death? Perhaps this was how the Mother Tree of Desire replaced the Chained God back then and seized the corresponding authority…

Thankfully, the current Chief of the City of Silver has a very clear mind. He knew ahead of time to seek out the secret existence backing Little Sun for help. By using the Fate Siphon charm, he remarkably foiled the True Creator's ploy…

Hmm, from the looks of it, the two powerful Sealed Artifacts of the City of Silver are good at purification. They're able to stop the shadow that can corrupt Death's remains…

*Heh heh, as The Fool, I seem to have crossed the True Creator once again. Of course, Amon will be the one taking the blame since the Worm of Time was contributed by "Him"…*Through Little Sun's description and relying on his own interference, Klein roughly figured out the hidden conflict that happened during the City of Silver's exploratory operation.

Meanwhile, he also gained a first look at Shepherd Elder's mental condition.

To Lovia, thin illusory black tubes that lead to the outside world was undoubtedly the key to the City of Silver's escape from the Forsaken Land of the Gods. Therefore, she was very certain of her actions this time, without showing any signs of regret. She would only believe that the Chief was the one who shattered that hope.

It's not too terrifying to have someone do evil deeds. What's most terrifying is when people who have a martyrish mentality do evil they believe to be right… Klein couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

As for why Little Sun knew what happened inside the mausoleum so clearly, it was obvious that Chief Colin Iliad had informed him during a casual chat.

At this point, Derrick had already recounted how the three Elders had retrieved a special Sealed Artifact. It was a Beyonder characteristic left behind by the former Chief that had fused with his bones.

The former Chief was from the Giant pathway, beginning from Sequence 9 Warrior to Sequence 4 Demon Hunter. The Ferryman potion he consumed corresponds to the Death pathway's Sequence 3. The two Beyonder characteristics mixed together must be weirder and more varied than a single pathway. Together with the added effects of Artificial Death, the final Sealed Artifact must be very powerful. Of course, the negative effects will probably be equally powerful…

Yes, back when the black illusory river was described, the various weird creatures likely corresponded to the Underworld. This is similar to the scene I saw in the Berserk Sea. It's also similar in effect to what Miss Sharron's mystical item created… As Klein thought about it, he listened to Little Sun wrap up the topic of the exploration before mentioning the monster known as Shapeshifter.

After Derrick finished describing it, Klein felt that Shapeshifters were very likely Bizarro Banes.

He hurriedly summoned a gold coin from the junk pile and did a divination to confirm his guess.

With Little Sun's current strength, there's no way for him to head to that city to hunt it. I can only wait until that Chief prays to The Fool once again or seeks help via Little Sun… Anyway, there's no rush. I haven't found the Spirit World Plunderer yet… Klein nodded indiscernibly.

After requesting Mr. Fool to pass the corresponding information to Mr. World, Derrick said that he had enough points and could soon exchange for the Beyonder characteristic for Sequence 5 Vampire and complete the three-party transaction, so he requested that Mr. Moon prepare himself.

…

On the Future which was slowly cruising across the waters of the Rorsted Archipelago.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya thanked Mr. Fool and nudged the glasses on her nose. Opening the window to the captain's cabin, she shouted to everyone, "Turn towards Bayam."

After issuing the command, this pirate admiral curled the corners of her mouth. She finally had the chance to establish a long-term cooperation with an Artisan.

But at that moment, she suddenly thought of a problem.

If she easily received the help of an Artisan, would Frank Lee, who hadn't been able to obtain a Sequence 5 potion formula, attempt to make the Druid Beyonder characteristic into an item to expedite his paused experiments?

That's not a good thing… Cattleya subconsciously raised her hand and pinched her forehead.

…

On the liner, Klein, who had finished handling the matters, focused on enjoying his trip.

Due to the Berserk Sea's abnormal change in weather, the liner he was on board had chosen to take a further and more roundabout sea route that was much safer. Furthermore, it was to dock at a harbor named Halman for the night.

Klein didn't alight and remained at a window-side table at the upper level's restaurant to have his dinner.

While waiting for his food, he casually looked out the window and took in the local night skyline.

Suddenly, he discovered a suspicious figure with a luggage bag preparing to board the ship.

The reason why he appeared suspicious wasn't only because the man was wearing a black overcoat and tall top hat, but that he wore a scarf that wrapped his face, hiding his physical features. All that was left were a pair of eyes.

And that pair of eyes were peeled to the ground, preventing anyone from discerning his actual appearance.

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CHAPTER 905
PSYCHOLOGICAL BLIND SPOT

Based on his experience from watching many detective animations, Klein believed that someone who wore a scarf to conceal his face and hid his physical characteristics with an overcoat was likely problematic. He probably hid an unspeakable secret, especially when it wasn't winter yet and the temperature in the Berserk Sea couldn't be considered cold.

However, this has nothing to do with me. Even if a locked-room murder mystery happens, the one having a headache would be the Captain… I should head above the gray fog later to do a divination and see if this trip will be smooth… Klein didn't mind the matter, but he still thought about it conscientiously.

He retracted his gaze and looked at the Desi roasted fish that was being served by the waiter.

After having dinner, he returned to his cabin and completed a divination above the gray fog. He obtained the conclusion that there wouldn't be drastic changes to the environment he was in and that everything would happen smoothly.

This allowed Klein to fall asleep peacefully without relying on Cogitation as he slept till daybreak.

With a whistle from the steam engine, the liner began moving and departing Halman Harbor.

The harbor could still be vaguely seen as Klein saw a figure there.

The figure wore a white shirt and a dark blue coat. He had a rather high nose, deeply recessed eyes, light blue eyes, and brown curly hair. His face was rather cut and his chin was slightly raised. He gave off a supercilious look.

With a sweep of his gaze, he quickly locked onto the liner which Klein was on.

At this moment, the sky suddenly darkened as though a door leading into the pitch-black land of illusions had formed.

A deafening typhoon stirred up from the seabed, surging upwards with massive amounts of blue mass. Dark lightning flashed like rifts in the void. They kept appearing and kept healing themselves until they disappeared.

This completely blocked the vision of those on the liner and at the harbor, putting them in two seemingly different worlds.

The Berserk Sea had once again shown its horror.

The liner failed to avoid or resist, and it could only continue cruising forward along the safe sea route that had relatively weaker storms.

What a coincidence… This likely isn't a coincidence… Standing behind the window of his cabin, Klein first sighed inwardly before coming to the conclusion that this sudden anomaly in the Berserk Sea was due to unnatural reasons.

Although it was common for the weather in the Berserk Sea to change suddenly without notice, to actually change at a particular point in time still left one suspicious.

The man at the dock is tracking the suspicious tourist from last night? And that tourist decided to change the weather upon realizing that he had been exposed, doing so that he can force the liner to leave? Klein made a guess when he made the connection.

And if that really were the case, it means that the suspicious passenger who hid his face with a scarf might very well be a demigod or someone who carried a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact!

After all, with Klein's present strength and items, it was impossible for him to trigger such a weather anomaly without the use of Sea God Scepter.

Of course, he also had other means like throwing out Azik's copper whistle to see if he could cause the entire Berserk Sea to go berserk.

Seriously? I just want to be a normal tycoon that's heading to the Southern Continent. Why would I encounter a pursuit at the level of demigods… Sigh, I'm under too much stress that my Sequence doesn't deserve… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and finally chose to believe the divination he made last night.

Amidst the storm, the wobbling liner cruised along a rather calm stretch with apocalyptic scenes around it. And most of the tourists wore calm looks as though they were very accustomed to such conditions. Only a few people who were on their first trip across the Berserk Sea were trembling, grabbing tightly to anything they could grab at.

Time ticked by as the gales and lightning gradually calmed down. Bit by bit, the sky brightened.

At this moment, Klein, who was on the deck, felt his spiritual perception trigger. He subconsciously looked in the direction of Halman Harbor.

Above the undulating dark blue waves, beneath white scattered clouds, there was a white radiant flame flying over at high speeds from afar.

The flame increased in size and became increasingly clearer until it revealed its complete form. It was a gigantic flaming spear!

The flaming spear tore across the sky and landed at the bow of the liner's deck. However, it didn't ignite anything. It burnt through half a wooden

plank and spread out before materializing into a figure.

The figure had a high nose, deeply recessed eyes, and blue eyes. He was none other than the man who had previously appeared at the dock!

He looked middle-aged as he slowly surveyed the area and walked through the wide-eyed and agape tourists before walking into the cabin.

The similarly agape Dwayne Dantès silently heaved a sigh of relief when he confirmed that the person wasn't here for him.

The way he appeared sure is cool. As expected of a demigod… Now, the only issue is that they do not come to blows. Even if the conflict cannot be helped, it's best they go to a neighboring sea to fight. Otherwise, there's no way this ship can withstand it… I can Teleport away quite successfully, but all these tourists… I'll only be able to save a few… Klein habitually drew the sign of the crimson moon on his chest, praying for the Goddess to bless them.

Just as he had such a thought, he saw a figure fly out of the cabin, slamming heavily onto the deck. It was none other than the suspicious tourist who had covered his face with a scarf.

This man had already revealed half his face. The tip of his nose was red and he had a thick beard around his mouth with saliva staining them.

His nearly triangular eyes were filled with horror. He held his hands to the deck as he kept crawling backward.

"Who got you to carry that item and put on such a disguise?" At the cabin's entrance, the middle-aged man with the high nose and blue eyes slowly walked out. He spoke in Intis with a heavy voice.

The suspicious tourist shook his head frantically.

"No, I don't know. He was also wearing the same. H-he gave me 100 pounds to take this ship to the Southern Continent before returning by myself!"

The middle-aged man silently watched with his penetrating glare that seemed to tear through his soul.

This made the tourist break out into a sweat as his body convulsed. He once again stammered his explanation, but there weren't any changes to it.

The man retracted his gaze before his body burst into white radiant flames.

Following that, he transformed into a gigantic flaming spear and shot towards the region where Halman Harbor was.

The flaming spear quickly disappeared into the distance, leaving a twinkling speck.

During this entire process, apart from at the very beginning, the demigod didn't take a second look at the surroundings tourists. It was as though they never existed.

A simple but smart ruse… By getting someone to disguise as himself and board the ship, then using certain means to control the weather; thus, creating proof that he's on the ship, but in actual fact, he had been at the harbor the entire time. Once the enemy starts the pursuit, he can then attempt to escape… Enlightened, Klein made a judgment.

This made him suspect if the pursuee was once a Conspirer, Magician, or other Beyonder that was good at coming up with ruses.

As for the person who transformed into a burning-white spear, his arrogance, detestable nature, and his usage of the Intis language had made Klein believe that he was probably a demigod from the Hunter pathway. It was possible that he was an Iron-blooded Knight.

I've no idea why there was a conflict… Klein shook his head and returned to his cabin.

On the deck, the tourists finally snapped to their senses as they discussed the supernatural phenomenon they had just seen in murmurs.

A person could transform into a flame, and the flame could reform into a human!

Amidst the noisy commotion, the liner continued cruising forward on the safe sea route. It didn't encounter any accidents midway, and it arrived at another harbor at midnight.

Like usual, Klein didn't alight, afraid that he would encounter something.

He took out his gold pocket watch and opened it to determine the time to head to the restaurant.

Another half an hour… Klein silently muttered to himself as he looked up and out the window.

At this moment, many tourists who were bound for this harbor were heading for the dock along the gangway with their luggage in hand.

As he swept his gaze, Klein's gaze suddenly stopped on a figure.

The figure wore a black bonnet. He had dark golden sideburns. His lips were tightly pursed and his facial features were clear and distinct, like an ancient, classical sculpture without any wrinkles.

He wasn't carrying any luggage, and soon, he stepped onto the dock with the crowd, disappearing into the corner of the road.

Klein just watched motionlessly, as though his body wasn't his.

He felt every drop of his blood turn cold as a name appeared in his mind: *Ince Zangwill!*

…

The street lamps on the harbor had already lit up. The liner's many windows also lit up in concert with them.

Dwayne Dantès was waiting inside a first-class cabin in darkness and silence.

Klein had already sat down without showing any emotion. All kinds of thoughts couldn't help but flash across his mind.

This is the first time I'm discovering signs of Ince Zangwill after the Great Smog of Backlund…

The demigod from before was probably tracking Ince Zangwill…

His tricks are more profound than I thought. He found someone to disguise as him and gave him items not to divert his trackers, but to create a mental blindspot. It made one subconsciously eliminate this ship from the possible options…

He was here from the beginning…

That coincidental change in weather was likely created by Ince Zangwill with 0-08…

Why would he be pursued by an Intis Hunter demigod… What is he plotting…

Amidst his churning thoughts, Klein suddenly took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew it.

Silently, Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr with her four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand appeared before him.

Klein opened his mouth before closing them again. Picking up a pen, he quickly wrote:

"Mr. Dwayne Dantès has discovered traces of Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea."

Folding the letter, Klein handed it along with a gold coin to Miss Messenger.

"Send it to the mailbox at Backlund's 7 Pinster Street."

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand turned at the same time as the eight eyes looked at Klein.

She didn't say anything and bit onto the letter and gold coin.

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CHAPTER 906
LEONARD'S WARNING

Backlund, North Borough.

The pitch-black night had the crimson moon covered by clouds. There were only street lamps on the two sides of the road that emitted a faint light, illuminating the road ahead and the doors of the nearby houses.

7 Pinster Street's mailbox was silently hiding in the intersection between light and dark, bathing in a cool breeze that blew from the side as though it was in a slumber.

At this moment, newspapers, bills, and letters from various unknown people suddenly spewed out from its mouth.

These objects seemed to be dragged by an invisible hand as they floated in midair before flying towards the door and entering through a gap.

Inside the house, at the foyer, the newspapers automatically spread open as they rapidly flipped over. Then, they were casually left on the chair, stacking over other newspapers.

The bills and letters continued flying into the living room, with the former quickly stopping. With a few shakes, they floated to the surface of the coffee table and lined up. The latter had their envelopes removed, and the letters without envelopes quickly unfolded themselves, showcasing themselves in midair.

After a while, a portion of these letters flew onto a rack on the first floor's study. Some rushed for the scissors to help it cut itself apart. Then, they

orderly surged into the washroom and were thrown into the toilet.

Whoosh!

The mechanical flush of the toilet was automatically depressed, washing away the paper shreds into the sewers.

7 Pinster Street went back to normal, and its silence was identical to an uninhabited house's.

Southern Continent. East Balam. Kolain City.

Leonard Mitchell, who had just arrived, was resting in a residence arranged by the local Church of Evernight.

Suddenly, that slightly-aged voice sounded in his mind:

"Punk, you have an important letter."

"What letter?" While Leonard asked softly, he already had a guess in mind.

To mail an important letter to 7 Pinster Street without caring that it was inhabited, there was only one, no—two people: Klein Moretti and Dwayne Dantès.

As for why the old man named Pallez Zoroast could still clearly read the letters sent to 7th Pinster Street despite the Berserk Sea and half the Northern Continent separating them, Leonard had only a guess or two. This was because he had helped the old man capture a specter before.

With regards to this, his theory was:

Old Man definitely used a Worm of Time to parasitize that specter, making it "His" eyes, ears, and mouth in the Northern Continent.

At that moment, Pallez Zoroast replied to his question.

"It's from Klein Moretti. He said that while Dwayne Dantès was heading to the Southern Continent, he discovered traces of Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea."

Leonard fell silent immediately as his mouth turned agape. However, he didn't say a word.

After a long while, he muttered with a slightly hoarse voice, "As expected, he didn't forget the need for revenge…

"What can I do?"

"What can you do? You're only a Sequence 6. Even if Ince Zangwill doesn't wield 0-08, you still lack the qualifications to exact vengeance on him. He just needs to reveal his Mythical Creature form to make you lose control and become a lunatic. The chances of you getting your revenge are zero! This is the qualitative change that godhood brings," Pallez Zoroast said rather sternly.

He paused before chuckling.

"Thankfully, you understand yourself in a way that's better than before. In the past, you definitely would've said that you would inform the Church with news of Ince Zangwill and join the team to pursue him. And now, you know to ask what you can do."

Leonard had wanted to retort a few times, but he ultimately didn't say a word.

Pallez Zoroast continued, *"What you can do for now is to give Klein Moretti some information. Wait for him to write back to you. Then, based on the arrangements written, provide the necessary assistance."*

"So no finding excuses so as to inform the Church of Ince Zangwill's location?" Leonard heavily asked, somewhat surprised.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, *"No hurry. Do it at the critical moment.*

"Although 0-08 enjoys causing its possessor's death, it doesn't wish to be sealed even more so. As long as you inform the Church of Ince Zangwill's location and begin a pursuit, it will immediately learn of it and make the necessary arrangements.

"Regarding this, you need to warn Klein Moretti."

Leonard was taken aback for a second as he asked, "Old Man, you seem to know 0-08 rather well."

It wasn't apparent in the past!

Pallez's slightly-aged voice chuckled.

"Of course I am. During the Fourth Epoch, 0-08 had once caused the death of an angel.

"I can't tell you too much because once you know of it, it will also know you. The more you know about it, the more likely you will become a character in its stories."

Leonard came to an actual realization of 0-08's terror from Old Man's vague words. This had already exceeded the mysticism he knew!

After some thought, Leonard asked habitually, "Then how should I hint to Klein Moretti without letting 0-08 know? Or that even if he were to know, it will be very superficial knowledge, making me a bystander in the story…"

Just as he said that, Leonard clasped his hands and gritted his teeth. Without waiting for Old Man's reply, he continued, "An indirect hint? I'll tell him I'll temporarily not inform the Church of Ince Zangwill's location… I believe he should be able to understand that there's a problem based on the situation. He will understand that we need to be extremely cautious. And

even if he fails to interpret that, his secret organization has members who understand the Fourth Epoch well enough to provide him with help.

"Also, just writing the sentence, 'Once you know it, it will also know you,' without mentioning 0-08 should be enough for Klein to guess what this is pointing at…"

After Pallez Zoroast finished listening, "He" chuckled and said, *"Humans will only grow under pressure."*

Leonard exhaled and sat up. He found a pen and paper and penned his thoughts.

Following that, he set up a ritual right on the heels of that and summoned Gehrman Sparrow's messenger.

…

Berserk Sea, Waypoint Island. On a liner docked at the harbor.

Many tourists weren't alighting. They were huddled in the lower deck cabins, waiting to arrive at the Southern Continent to begin a life filled with hope.

They had gone through a great deal of effort to save up the fare for a ship ride that spanned a few short days. They were from Loen and were those who had been forced to take such risks.

Klein, who was acting as the tycoon, Dwayne Dantès, wasn't like them. He lived in a spacious, clean first-class cabin that could even be described as luxurious. Under some candlelight, he opened the letter that had just been delivered by Reinette Tinekerr.

Will not be informing the Church of Ince Zangwill's location for the time being… To Leonard, although the source of the tip might put him in certain danger, it's not impossible for him to do it… Didn't he join the Red Gloves

to seek revenge? This means that he has a reason why he can't sound the alarm on Ince Zangwill… As Klein thought, he continued reading the rest of the letter: "Once you know it, it will also know you."

Suddenly, Klein exclaimed, finding the description somewhat familiar!

This is very similar to the Twilight Hermit Order. Any mention of it will be known… So, 0-08 is a Sealed Artifact of the Spectator pathway? Leonard isn't informing the Church of this matter because he's held back by this. He wishes to wait for a better opportunity? This is likely something the grandpa in his body told him… Klein nodded in thought, feeling thankful that he hadn't asked Reinette Tinekerr for help moments ago.

That would've been equally dangerous for Miss Messenger.

Besides, most important of all, I haven't made any preparations. If I were to only rely on a helper I hire, my plan might very well be detected by 0-08 ahead of time. A series of coincidences would then be created, producing a targeted arrangement… Klein silently sighed and felt that he needed to do something, but he was at a loss as to how to begin.

From the angle of improving his strength, the acquirement of the corresponding ingredients of Bizarro Bane and Spirit World Plunderer depended on the subsequent request of the City of Silver's Chief and how long Miss Magician could receive the exact coordinates from her teacher. These were all dependent on external factors that Klein had no means of expediting.

The only thing he could do was to try his best to digest the Marionettist potion as quickly as possible.

And after concluding most of the acting principles, the actual implementation was more important.

Therefore, Klein believed that he needed to obtain two marionettes within a short span of time.

He had previously been delaying it because he didn't have any good targets. It stemmed from him being in Backlund with servants around him. Unless they were special marionettes, it was very difficult to hide their existences. And now, he was almost at the Southern Continent. He decided that as long as he identified an evil target who deserved the gallows, he would first transform them into his marionette until he had a better replacement!

Perhaps using an ordinary marionette to complete a rather difficult task will accelerate the digestion… Heh, my standards for a marionette has dropped to its lowest. All it needs to know is Dutanese. That way, I don't have to hire an interpreter; after all, I can share their senses… Klein quickly made up his mind and planned on writing to Leonard Mitchell after he had a more advanced plan.

…

East Balam, Kolain City.

Klein carried his luggage and stepped onto the dock, touching ground on the Southern Continent.

He looked into the distance at the city that was built on terraces. He silently said to himself, *I have to have two marionettes when I leave this place.*

And before that, he had one thing to do. It was to lose the tail of the "followers" that the military had arranged.

The two gentlemen were rather good at being spies, but to Klein, they were as bright as fireflies in the night. This was because, no matter how well disguised they were, Klein could use his Faceless's ability of observation and his memory of a human's physical features and looks to recognize them at a glance.

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CHAPTER 907
THE POWER OF MYSTICISM

Most of Kolain City's buildings were built on paths that spiraled upwards. There would be squares or small towns in the middle or on rather flat, open spaces.

Klein carried his luggage, and with his spiritual intuition as a Seer, he randomly chose a direction to proceed in and found a relatively lively bar along the way.

There weren't many carriages on the streets, and the rental types were a rare sight. The most popular means of transportation in East Balam was a "Coffin." This stemmed from their traditions of worshipping Death. People viewed coffins as items that brought about serenity and peace; therefore, Klein often saw people walking past him carrying a black coffin. The lids were lighter than the usual kind and were just like a carriage door that could be opened at any time.

*They're carried via two, four, or either people; or by horses or single-horned goats… Such a tradition is quite terrifying at night. Hmm, it's not much better in the day. The entire city feels dark and creepy… *Klein took in the "scenery" around him as he walked into the square. On the left was a cathedral of the Lord of Storms, and on the right were restaurants and bars.

When he stopped in his tracks, a coffin being carried by four men was also lowered.

As the lid was opened, the passenger inside the coffin stood up and took a step forward. He was a Northern Continent-styled gentleman dressed in a white shirt and black vest.

The gentleman's formal coat was slung against his arm, something he wore only after he left the coffin.

Then, Klein saw the man head straight for the Lord of Storms cathedral and enter it.

This sure is quite discordant… Doesn't the Church of Storms enjoy changing the traditions of the colonies and forcefully implementing those of Loen? Why don't they do that in East Balam? Is it because the Death pathway and Evernight pathway are similar, so the Church of Storms wishes to preserve some of the traditions of Death worship, so as to curb the proliferation of the Church of Evernight? Klein nodded in thought as he turned to the buildings on the right, prepared to enter one of the bars there.

Having experienced it personally, he came to the realization as to why the dressing style of the ancient Balam Empire was written as such in so many history books.

They enjoy wearing trousers, those that are light and breezy. They find creases beautiful… Isn't this to make it easier to lie in a coffin when outside? Klein shook his head with a smile as he pushed open the heavy wooden door. Squeezing through the drunkards, he walked towards the bar counter.

And at this moment, the two military "followers" had deliberately opened up a distance from Dwayne Dantès to prevent themselves from being exposed. They had walked to the door side.

Taking this brief reprieve, Klein suddenly switched directions and passed through the crowd like a fish in water, heading straight for the bar's backdoor.

Although he didn't know Dutanese, he could read drawings on signs and knew where the washrooms and places where entry was forbidden to customers.

After circling to a blind spot from the door, Klein quickly took off his coat and slung it on his arm.

Immediately, with his golden cane, he reached out his palm to cover his face and slow down his pace. Turning directions again, he headed for the bar's entrance.

After opening up a distance of nearly ten meters from where he took off his coat, Klein lowered his face-shielding right hand to reveal a completely different face.

His white sideburns, deep eyes, and elegant demeanor was all gone. He had switched to a common Loenese face that could be seen anywhere on the Northern Continent.

With luggage and cane in hand, Klein walked staidly towards the two military "followers." As they were looking for Dwayne Dantès, he walked past them and left the bar.

Be it tracking or anti-tracking, they were both strong traits of a Faceless!

Returning to the square, Klein turned into a sloped alley that led to higher ground. He planned on finding a hotel elsewhere.

As he walked on a rather deserted path, he suddenly heard a woman's frantic cries.

The voice was only maintained for a very short moment before it was silenced.

Although he didn't know what she was shouting, Klein could sense the horror, fear, and panic in her voice. Hence, he switched directions and entered a narrower and more deserted trail.

In less than ten seconds, he saw a local man in his thirties who was pressing against a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old girl in a secluded corner and was

using violence against her. His skin was brownish, and he had rather soft facial features.

Klein took a glance and slowed down his pace before stopping in the nearby shadows.

At this moment, the girl's face was extremely horrified and distorted. However, regardless of how she struggled, she was unable to free herself and had only received a beating in response.

Her tears and snot flowed out while her mouth was stuffed with cloth. All she could do was produce muffling sounds.

At this moment, she was surprised that the rotten egg's attempts to take off her clothes had slowed down.

"…”

Without having the time to consider what was happening, she subconsciously looked at the rotten egg and found that his eyes had widened. His facial muscles were writhing slowly, but he was unable to form a complete expression on his face. Then, his limbs twitched and paused as they continued doing what they were doing but were easily avoided.

The girl instinctively pushed him, which had ended up having surprisingly excellent results. Freed, she immediately stood up and fled. However, she couldn't help but feel her legs go limp. After a few steps, she tripped over a stone and nearly fell to the ground.

At this moment, she heard the sound of footsteps behind her. Reeling in anxiety, she fumbled to her feet.

But almost immediately, the sounds of footsteps suddenly ceased.

The girl subconsciously looked back only to see the rotten egg standing two meters away. His joints were making strange actions as though they were rusted.

What's happening… The girl felt as though she was having a nightmare.

The brown-skinned man struggled for a moment before quietening down. Revealing a smile, he said in Dutanese, "In the future, when you meet someone like me, remember to head for the nearest cathedral or somewhere where there's plenty of people."

The girl was taken aback for a moment before she screamed. Turning around, she ran as fast as she could.

Subconsciously, she chose to run in the direction of the square where the cathedral was.

When the calm and silence of the deserted spot was restored, the brown-skinned man turned to look at the nearby shadows where Klein walked out from.

A new marionette… His body isn't strong enough, and he's not nimble enough. He lacks Beyonder powers and looks rather fierce. Apart from knowing Dutanese, he's completely useless, Klein simply evaluated. *If it wasn't because he was committing a crime and that I wasn't proficient in the local language, I would've buried him immediately.*

He couldn't help but make a comparison with his former marionette, Admiral of Blood Senor.

Senor was a Wraith and was capable of Mirror Blink. He could hide in gold coins and reflective surfaces. I didn't need to worry that he would be seen by others… He also had Shriek and the ability to possess others. Together with a Marionettist, it's a perfect combination…

More importantly, he also knew Dutanese…

Comparing this marionette and him is like the difference between a penny and 42,000 gold pounds.

I've no idea what his name is, and I can only use powers to sense some superficial thoughts. I have no way of obtaining deeper memories unless I encounter someone or something familiar. There would be a corresponding change in the spirit to release more information… I'll just call him "Ah Fu." Ah, no—that's too Chinese. "Oaf" it is.

Klein rubbed his temples and sighed. He needed to leave the area with his new marionette, Oaf, before the girl led the clergymen over.

Before long, with the help of his marionette's translations, he found an inn to stay in at the border between Kolain City's flourishing and backward area. This place didn't need him to provide any proof of identity, even though Klein had already changed his appearance to that of a regular local.

There's an even greater lack of administration management than the colonies at sea… Klein put down his luggage and threw most of the cash he brought with him above the gray fog, leaving only 50 pounds for his daily expenses.

Meanwhile, having crossed the Berserk Sea, and without needing to be afraid of causing any further anomalies, he took down the copper whistle and iron cigar case from the mysterious space above the gray fog so as to make it easier for Mr. Azik to locate him.

After finishing all of this and having had dinner on the liner, he had the spare time to seek out his second marionette.

As for how he could find one, Klein, who didn't understand Kolain City well enough, decided on using his traits as a Seer and do so with mysticism means!

With Oaf, he left the inn. Klein snapped a branch of a Donningsman Tree and used it as a dowsing rod. With great familiarity, he used Cogitation and

muttered, "Location of my new marionette."

In the silent environment, pairs of cold eyes seemed to pierce through the obstruction of the incorporeal and the corporeal and landed on the dowsing rod.

The branch fell to the ground and pointed in a direction.

After advancing forward a little, he did another divination and followed his new revelation. Seven to eight turns later, he arrived at a steep staircase.

This staircase was connected to many roads in Kolain. One had to look up to see the top, and there was no one at all.

*The divination's revelation is pointing here… Why isn't there anyone here? The result isn't accurate because I didn't do a divination above the gray fog? But I'm already a Sequence 5 Marionettist. My divination abilities are definitely one of the best below that of High-Sequence Beyonders… *Klein frowned slightly as he surveyed the area, but he failed to find any targets.

After some thought, he walked towards the staircase and sat in the shadows of the lowest step. He then waited in boredom despite a lack of confidence.

After a few minutes, he stood up again and made Oaf sit where he was sitting.

Then, Klein opened up a gap from him and hid two hundred meters away in a hidden spot.

…

Kolain City. Lower Lip District.

Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone arrived at a nearby district with the Red Gloves team captain, Soest.

With the night as cover, Soest emphasized the operation to all the members once again.

"Our target this time is Ulika who's living at Unit 13. He's a rather important member of the Numinous Episcopate and is in charge of communicating with the different small teams in Backlund.

"Although all our intelligence points to him not being a demigod, I have applied for a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact to be safe. Her Excellency, Goddess's Eye, is also ready to provide her assistance to us at any time.

"Also, most of the residents of this district are locals. We have to be wary of them also being members of the Numinous Episcopate."

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CHAPTER 908
NOT LEAVING ANY PROBLEMS

Lower Lip District. 13 Canine Street.

The plump Ulika was sitting on a sofa with his tiny dark brown eyes and skin. Wrapping a dried yellowed tobacco leaf and ten different kinds of Southern Continent herbs and spices together, he cut it into long strips.

Then, he held his self-made East Balam smoke pipe in his hand and brought it close to the matchstick his subordinate had lit. The end blackened and curled as it glowed red.

Biting at its end and taking a deep suck, Ulika slowly exhaled white smoke that was tainted with light blue hues. He looked at the visitor on the single-seater opposite him and said, "This is what a cigarette is. A real cigarette.

"The ones in the Northern Continent are only suitable for children!"

The person sitting on the single-seater was a man in his forties. He had a high nose, blue eyes, and gentle facial contours. His black hair was thick and curly. His skin color wasn't too dark, but neither was it fair. He resembled a mixed-blood between someone from Loen and Balam.

He chuckled upon hearing that as he replied in Dutanese, "Unfortunately, I have zero interest in any kind of cigarettes."

"Enzo, you don't know how to enjoy life at all…" Before Ulika could finish his sentence, his powerful spirituality that was a result of his pathway had warned him of some danger.

The way it suddenly came and appeared in such a pressing manner made Ulika instantly determine that the problem wasn't trivial.

He had yet to leap away from where he was sitting when all he saw was darkness. It was as though he could directly see the night sky outside. A strong sense of sleepiness overwhelmed him as he felt a level of serenity from the bottom of his heart.

Along Canine Street, be it the houses with lit lamps or extinguished lamps, it became abnormally silent at that very moment. It was as though no living being lived in them, or that everyone had fallen asleep at the same moment.

At this moment, the snoring and slumped Ulika suddenly leaped up. His eyes wore the strange combination of a reverie and lucidity.

Behind him, a nearly illusory girl with pale skin was stuck to his back at some point in time!

This girl's eyes were bluish-green, and her lips were jet black. Her eyes were silently looking to the side, and her ghastly pale and translucent limbs had drilled into Ulika's body as though she was a spirit that couldn't be shaken off.

Her existence brought a chill to his Soul Body, making Ulika barely resist his abnormal sleepiness as he broke free from the influence of a Nightmare.

Before Ulika could completely regain his lucidity, he instinctively rushed to the staircase. Extending his palms, he exerted strength towards the front as though he was pushing a door that didn't exist.

In a blink of an eye, a difficult-to-describe bronze door covered in mysterious patterns appeared in front of Ulika. It wobbled and creaked before cracking open a gap.

The gap led to an endless darkness. In it were indescribable eyes that watched the outside world.

Meanwhile, large amounts of squirming and strange objects that were still unrecognizable surged wildly from the gap.

Ulika was about to continue exerting his strength to open the door and cause the terrifying world behind him to descend upon Canine Street when he suddenly saw a pair of pale, translucent palms appear out of thin air. They passed through the deep darkness and pressed down on the interior of the door's gap.

The palms didn't originate from anything. They weren't connected to a body, and the wrist was bloody. It was unknown who had severed them!

Both parties exerted their strength as the mysterious bronze door stopped moving. It neither closed or opened further.

High above Unit 13, Soest, who was already a Spirit Warlock, was floating in midair thanks to an invisible force. His hands carried a sundial made of gold as he slowly raised it high.

When the golden sundial was finally raised above Soest's head, its resplendent glow flowed out and quickly outlined and became one.

Suddenly, another sun seemed to appear in midair, directing all the light and heat at 13 Canine Street.

None of that caused any damage as they penetrated through the building and landed above the bronze door, enveloping Ulika who was standing in front of it.

Ulika instantly grimaced in extreme pain as the pale and nearly translucent girl let out a shrill scream, but it was stopped by the "sunlight" and drowned by the onslaught.

She warped and quickly evaporated, producing wisps of black gases that dissipated into the sea of light.

There wasn't a single spot inside the building that remained dark!

After the "sunlight" faded, the indescribable bronze door had already vanished. On the ground was a black swollen corpse that was effusing pale yellow oil stains.

With a boom, the corpse tore apart as a thin, tiny figure leaped out from inside.

This figure had identical looks to Ulika, but its skin was raven-black as though it was stained in ink. The surface of its body that stood at a height of around 1.2 to 1.3 meters had sticky pus flowing across it.

The moment he appeared, he dashed for the staircase with a ludicrous speed. Burrowing into the cellar, he opened a secret trapdoor he had prepared in advance as he dashed forward as fast as he could.

In just ten seconds, the miniaturized black version of Ulika saw the entrance —hope.

He didn't lower his guard as he gently clenched his right fist, producing about eight transparent illusory figures from his body.

They were of all kinds of shapes and sizes, as though they were an abomination that fused the characteristics of humans, plants, and certain animals. Some held Ulika's arm, others lifted his feet as they took off in flight.

Right on the heels of that, a mechanical switch was shifted. Gears started rotating as the exit door flung open, leading to a silent and dark street corner.

Further ahead were streets that stood on lower ground, and on the two sides of the streets were rows of houses. They appeared like the sea that churned with the light of the crimson moon.

Ulika was just about to use the help of spirits to fly out of the secret passage and disappear into the other districts of Kolain City when his eyes reflected a foggy lake.

The lake shimmered with light, producing a tranquil beauty. In the middle, concentric circles rippled out as beautiful and illusory figures floated up.

This was a powerful type of spirit. Human legends often deemed it "the Goddess of the Lake"!

Many a time, the strength of a Spirit Guide depended on the deceased or a natural spirit they found and controlled. It was the same with Spirit Warlocks. However, the inclination for Spirit Guides were the deceased, while for Spirit Warlocks, they were better at controlling natural spirits.

At this moment, the strange transparent figures around Ulika uttered a monotonous sound of horror. Throwing away the arms and legs they were carrying, they drilled into the thin pitch-black body like the wind.

With a crash, Ulika fell to the ground, but he didn't feel any pain, which was a result of intense sleepiness assaulting him. It made him fall asleep without realizing it.

At the exit, Daly Simone, who was wearing a Spirit Medium robe, with her face made up with blue eyeshadow and blush, walked out of some unknown location. Looking at the 1.2-meter-tall Ulika, she said,

"The deceased spirit he fused with is very strange. If it doesn't use a living human's body as a 'house,' it will quickly dissipate.

"We need to make every second count in order to obtain information."

In the shadows beside her, Leonard Mitchell walked out. He looked at Daly Simone in surprise and said, "Aren't you a Spirit Guide? How do you control a Goddess of the Lake?"

"Aren't you a poet? Why don't you write poems?" Daly snapped back.

…

On the other end of the street, on a gentle cliff, a figure quickly moved downwards with the protruded pieces of rock, quickly landing in the shadowy corners of Jaw Street below him.

His skin was light-colored and his eyes were blue. He had thick raven-black hair that curled slightly. He was none other than Enzo who had been a guest at Ulika's place at Lower Lip District's 13 Canine Street.

Enzo wasn't a member of the Numinous Episcopate. He was one of the traitors of the Life School of Thought that had escaped under the enticement of the Rose School of Thought.

Furthermore, he was neither a Beyonder from the Apothecary pathway that led to the Vampire Sequence, nor did he worship the Primordial Moon. He was only a person who didn't wish to accept the various rules set by his teacher and his teacher's teacher. He wished to lead a carefree life and take advantage of being a Winner.

Such a state of mind was strongly advocated by the Rose School of Thought's indulgence faction, so it didn't take long for him to formally join them, allowing him to freely satisfy all his various desires.

This time, he was representing the Rose School of Thought to make contact with the Numinous Episcopate in Kolain and discuss the possibility of cooperating on certain matters. To his surprise, Tenebrous Deceased Ulika had suffered a sudden raid by the Church of Evernight. It was a high-level raid!

*Thankfully, I'm good at anti-divination. The Church of Evernight members didn't know ahead of time that I was at Ulika's place, and they didn't pay too much attention to me. They just thought of me as Ulika's subordinate, allowing me to find a chance to escape the core region. Besides, that

"sunlight" mainly purifies objects with the power of death, evil, and corruption. It didn't deal much damage to me… That's likely a demigod-level attack… *Enzo walked to the shadows in the street and couldn't help but recall what had just happened.

After fleeing quite a distance, he turned to look behind him and discovered no one was chasing him. He immediately heaved a sigh of relief and chuckled.

A Winner is a Winner, the eternal Winner!

Enzo recovered his usual confidence as he proceeded down the street with a smile. Then, he turned to his left and quickly moved down the stairs.

It was a steep and long staircase that reached many lower-level streets.

…

In the vicinity of Canine Street, Soest suddenly opened his eyes and said to Leonard and Daly Simone, "There was a man named Enzo at Ulika's place. He's a member of the Rose School of Thought and doesn't have a low Sequence. He probably enjoys quite an important position.

"You are to quickly search the surroundings and see if you can find any traces of him and try to capture him successfully. Don't leave any problems behind."

As for the other Red Gloves and the local Nighthawks, they either had to capture the remaining Numinous Episcopate members or were already capturing them in dreams. They hoped to obtain firsthand news as quickly as possible. Only a few were left behind to watch for any accidents and protect their companions.

"Yes, Captain Soest." Leonard didn't hesitate to agree.

Daly grabbed at the wind and cupped her hand to her ear. After listening for two to three seconds, she said, "The little guys around here tell me that someone did escape via the cliff."

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CHAPTER 909
SERVING GOOD LUCK

On the steep and long rocky staircase, the crimson moonlight illuminated its midsection, leaving rather thick shadows along its sides.

Enzo was like a normal pedestrian at night, walking a little anxiously but without showing any signs of being flustered. He had a deep faith in his excellent good luck, being a winner in life, one that wouldn't be caught by the Nighthawks.

Seeing that he would be done after a few more flights of steps, Enzo, who was once a Monster, suddenly sensed something as he turned his head to look at the shadows in the lowest point of the staircase.

He then saw a figure sitting there in a daze. His looks and figure appeared rather indistinct due to the lighting, and he was dressed in the standard outfit of someone from East Balam.

The figure took out a box of matchsticks and struck a match to light up the surroundings.

Enzo didn't bother sizing up the person when he suddenly saw a scene before his eyes.

The figure threw a matchstick over as though he was gifting him something. And when the matchstick approached, it suddenly burst into a ridiculous inferno as a man wearing a formal suit and top hat walked out!

Seeing scenes he shouldn't see, and hearing sounds he shouldn't hear, were a daily occurrence for a Monster. Having become a Winner, Enzo was already

used to all of this. Without any thought, he fully believed in his intuition and lunged forward, jumping off the staircase and making two rolls onto the lower street.

At the same time, the brown-skinned marionette, Oaf, suddenly stood up. After bending his back, he hurled the matchstick in his hand at the location where Enzo was previously standing.

Before the matchstick hit the ground, scarlet flames extended out into midair in a resplendent and brilliant manner.

Amidst the flames, Klein's black-suited figure with a half top hat leaped out. However, he had lost sight of his target.

Klein had discovered someone rapidly coming down the staircase about ten seconds ago as though he was hiding from something. Suspecting that this was his new marionette, he immediately did a dream divination and obtained the revelation that the man was related to the Rose School of Thought and wasn't anyone good.

With such a result, Klein didn't hesitate to take action. Unfortunately, due to the lack of time, he didn't have the time to use Paper Angel which had been recorded in Creeping Hunger to interfere with the target's spiritual intuition, and as a result, it made his ambush fail.

At this moment, Oaf had already left the final flight of steps on the staircase. He was running with large strides towards Enzo, who had just stood up.

Enzo's mind stirred. Without dodging, he nimbly turned his body to the side, avoiding the ordinary attack.

Then, he drew his gun and quickly aimed. With a bang, he shot Oaf's chest.

As blood gushed out, Oaf staggered for a moment before collapsing. His breathing rapidly weakened.

Klein took this brief opportunity as his body vanished, phasing right in front of the target to block his escape route.

Enzo seemed to have an inexplicable strange premonition. He immediately tightly shut his eyes

He didn't know why he did so, but as a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Fate pathway, believing his intuition was an instinct!

Immediately after that, Enzo frantically switched directions. Attempting to rely on his spiritual intuition, he rushed into another street, but at this moment, the man in the suit who didn't have any outstanding features appeared in front of him again.

Klein's figure kept disappearing and appearing in every direction, as though he was running around Enzo at high speeds, often blocking his path but not dealing any direct attacks. Whether he used Beyonder powers or not, it made Enzo face a figure wearing a black suit and half top hat no matter where he turned to.

For an instant, Enzo with his eyes clothes even imagined that he was facing a group of enemies instead of one enemy.

A Traveler was often able to create the effect of being besieged!

In just ten seconds, Enzo, who had failed to find a path to escape, suddenly jolted. His actions instantly slowed down as his mind and joints seemed to be injected with glue.

Traveling works well with a Marionettist as well. While Klein was phasing around, he kept maintaining a distance of ten meters from Enzo! He had been secretly controlling his Spirit Body Threads all this time!

No good… He doesn't attack… and is only blocking me… not because… he is waiting… for the Nighthawks… but for… another reason… Enzo, who still had his eyes shut, felt his heart tighten. Suddenly, he stepped onto a

rock, causing his body to lose balance. He slammed heavily to the ground, causing his revolver to fly several meters away.

Plop!

The pain and shock had snapped Enzo out of his suppressed state. He found his fluidity again.

Enzo was no stranger to such accidents. As a Winner, he often obtained an advantage due to all kinds of low-probability events and thus clinch victory.

Without hesitation, he was just about to dash towards the end of the street to his side and flip over the fence to jump into the sea, allowing what fate had arranged for him to escape his predicament when another scene flashed in his mind:

In it, he was breaking out into a coughing fit, to the point of not being able to stand up or open up his stride!

Ailments! The enemy can infect me with ailments! He isn't attacking me and is simply blocking my escape route in order to keep me in this area; thus, infecting me with ailments in an unnoticeable manner! Enzo's heart skipped a beat as he suddenly felt a strong sense of delight.

The Green Essence ring he wore came from a believer of the Primordial Moon. Upon activation, it could easily treat any ailments or injuries that weren't too serious!

This is luck! Enzo pretended to not discover the infectious ailment in the air. Exerting strength in his palms, he lunged forward and followed his predetermined route towards the fence at the end of the street.

Moments after he took two steps, he suddenly coughed and involuntarily slowed down.

His coughing didn't quell like usual. Instead, it was worsening as though he was about to cough out his lungs.

Klein's figure flashed and appeared behind the target while he maintained ten meters from him.

At this moment, Enzo spread his arms and allowed invisible waves to ripple out of his body.

It was like a pure psyche storm that swept all Spirit Bodies in the vicinity, bringing with it an intense sense of drowsiness and calamity.

Klein similarly had a premonition for danger. The moment Enzo spread his arms, his body had already vanished from his spot and had appeared in the midsection of the steep staircase.

Still having his eyes closed, Enzo realized that he didn't receive his desired effect. He immediately abandoned the idea of escaping after finishing his target. He continued running towards the fence at the end of the street.

He had a hunch that if he stalled a little longer, a number of Nighthawks would catch up to him, making the situation more chaotic.

And as a former Lucky One and a Winner, the more chaotic a situation, the higher the chances of him escaping!

At this moment, as he had repeatedly changed directions while running blindly, he once again passed by Oaf, who had been shot in the chest.

On Oaf's left finger was a golden ring with an inlaid ruby.

A sanguine beam flashed from the beam as Oaf's injuries began recovering. He bounced up and widened his mouth, biting down on Enzo who was running past.

His tongue seemed to lose substance as it transformed into a blob of flesh and blood.

Flower of Blood!

Oaf wore the Flower of Blood ring which Klein had obtained from Mr. X. It could randomly allow the wearer to abandon any rationality in order to become a beast. On the other hand, it could allow the wearer to control their body at a deeper level. As long as they didn't suffer from instant death or become completely purified, they could heal from any kind of injury!

At the same time, it also came with flesh and blood magic. It was a mystical item that was very suited for marionettes!

Before Klein came out to seek a new marionette, he didn't know which pathway or Sequence his target would be. Therefore, to make well-rounded preparations, he made Oaf wear the Flower of Blood ring. This way, he could direct a play of him being the main assailant with the marionette as the secondary assailant, but in fact, it was the exact opposite.

Just as Enzo ran past Oaf, he felt a stabbing pain in his knee as though his previous fall had given him some light injuries.

The moment this thought flashed across his mind, he hurriedly crouched down and felt a figure fly past his head. It missed!

Oaf's sudden attack still failed to be effective against a Winner!

Enzo was just about to smile and run again when he suddenly had a premonition. He subconsciously curled up and protected his vital spots.

At the same time, Oaf suddenly swelled up and silently exploded.

Flesh and blood formed a storm, sweeping through a rather large area in the vicinity, hitting Enzo again and again.

One of the preparations Klein had done was to use a power of Creeping Hunger after its mutation. He had planted a Flesh Bomb in his marionette's body!

WIth a clank, the golden ring with an inlaid ruby landed on the stone slabs in the street. Klein's figure flashed to Enzo's side.

He raised his left palm and made his palm pitch-black. As though they were formed of granules, he said a word filled with evil and corruption: "Slow!"

Thanks to his luck, Enzo had avoided most of the damage. His lightly injured body suddenly turned still as his struggling actions slowed down. His curled pose changed bit by bit.

Right on the heels of that, he opened his eyes due to the pain, and a figure wearing a black suit and half top hat was reflected in his eyes.

"Ah!"

Enzo let out a tragic cry as he raised his hands to cover his eyes.

Streams of blood seeped out from the gaps in his fingers.

Monster? Looking at his writhing target, Klein pricked up his brows. He continued controlling the Spirit Body Threads and quickly achieved initial control.

This time, there weren't any accidents that broke the subsequent procedure. In a half-crazy state with scales growing from his body, Enzo was powerless to resist. Klein rather smoothly deepened his control.

Time ticked by when Enzo suddenly stood up and converged the protruded snake-like scales.

He pressed his hand to his chest and bowed at Klein. Then, he walked to the side and bent down to pick up the golden ring with the inlaid ruby. Wearing

it on his left hand's index finger, it matched the emerald ring on his other hand.

Klein held back the urge of looking at himself with his new marionette. He got Enzo to clear up the scene of the remnant flesh and any traces left behind.

After doing all of this, he walked into the shadows with his marionette and quickly vanished.

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CHAPTER 910
MONSTER PATHWAY

A few minutes later, Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell, who had repeatedly made errors in judgment, finally arrived at the top of the steep staircase.

They proceeded down the steps at a very slow speed, cautious of their surroundings, and they were ready to enter combat at any moment.

However, they failed to encounter any abnormalities even when they reached the bottom of the flight of stairs. They didn't even find any useful clues.

Daly grabbed onto the wind, cupped her hand to her ear, and listened carefully.

A few seconds later, she looked around her and said, "There was a gunshot. A weapon once dropped around the street bend. Th-that man named Enzo is d-dead…”

"Who did it?" Leonard asked in surprise.

From his point of view, due to the repeated failures they had encountered, Enzo had easily escaped their pursuit. The possibility of a Rose School of Thought monitor silencing him and wiping away any clues was zero.

If that were the case, who could've killed that Beyonder who was suspected to be a Sequence 5 or 6?

It needed to be mentioned that the Red Gloves had used a Sealed Artifact to implement anti-divination before they carried out tonight's operation. It was unlikely for anyone to predict it ahead of time and wait there to hunt the escaping Enzo.

Daly shook her head.

"Those little guys didn't see anything. It's likely a Beyonder who's good at anti-divination…

"Perhaps it's Enzo's enemy, and they had been planning to act tonight."

She simply offered a guess of hers, and the duo began independently searching the nearby streets to see if they could find any missed clues.

Taking this opportunity, Leonard circled to a fence in a particular street. Suppressing his tone, he asked, "Old Man, did you discover anything?"

Inside him, Pallez Zoroast replied after three seconds, *"You should have heard a tragic scream and had used that to correct the direction of your pursuit effort.*

"It was let out by Enzo. He had apparently seen something extremely terrifying and indescribable, something that could directly cause damage and corruption to his Soul Body."

Leonard was taken aback for a moment. He narrowed his eyes as he repeated softly, "Extremely terrifying and indescribable…"

…

Inside the inn, Klein Teleported back with his new marionette.

He then made his marionette stand to his side as he sat down. As he sized up his marionette, he sighed.

A Beyonder of the Monster pathway. But he's still inferior to Senor. There's no way for him to hide in a gold coin for ease of transport. I can only let him follow beside me…

From his Beyonder Sequence, he isn't a core member of the Rose School of Thought, but his Sequence isn't too low. Some importance must've been placed on him. That also means that if I don't disguise him, it's very easy for me to be targeted by the Rose School of Thought…

On the contrary, I can probably use him as bait to fish for another Wraith. When the time comes, he can walk alone while I hide 200 meters away to wait for the bait to be hooked.

No, I can't. I mustn't let greed get to my head. The Southern Continent is where the Rose School of Thought is active. Once I expose my location, with how much importance the Mother Tree of Desire places on me, not only will a saint come, even an angel might appear!

Yes, it's better if I disguise this marionette. As a Faceless, I'm quite skilled at disguises…

Then, I'll continue using mystical methods to find my next marionette. I'll wait for Danitz to finish his investigation and for Mr. Azik to come find me.

Klein quickly made up his mind. Using a myriad of means, he gained an understanding of his new marionette's level and Beyonder powers.

He was a Sequence 5 Winner of the Fate pathway!

In this pathway, a Sequence 9 Monster was one who had super high spiritual perception. They often heard sounds others couldn't hear, and also see things others couldn't see. This allowed them to occasionally see the future and have an acute intuition for danger.

Beyonders of this Sequence often entered a state of enlightenment as they muttered indecipherable words. It was the reason why they were treated as

real monsters.

As for the corresponding Sequence 8 Robot, the Beyonders would obtain terrifying calculation skills and precise control. The various parts of their bodies in those aspects would be clearly boosted, making them talented at close combat and shooting.

At the same time, they also had the powers of divination and anti-divination.

Sequence 7 was named Lucky One or Lucky, Beyonders of this level frequently encountered lucky events in their daily lives, like finding money on the street, having enemies miss shots aimed at them, getting dice rolls as they wished, and having women they like to also like them back. However, their luck wasn't fixed and would fluctuate. At times, they were especially lucky, and at other times, they were no different from an ordinary person. Therefore, it wasn't something that could be relied upon, and one had to temper one's expectations.

Sequence 6 was Calamity Priest. On the one hand, Beyonders could passively suffer all kinds of calamities, but they could foresee it and make preparations to eliminate or mitigate the effects. On the other hand, they would actively attract different kinds of calamities, affecting a target and enemy as a result. Then, using one's advantage of being lucky, avoid most of the danger and attack during the chaos. To put it simply, they could pull their opponents into a situation where they could take advantage of their strengths the best.

Of course, many Calamity Priests could use the dangers of their own passive encounters to attack their enemies.

Meanwhile, Calamity Priests could create psyche storms. Using their spirituality that surpassed that of other pathways, they could directly affect their opponent's Soul Bodies, causing them to feel dizzy and lost. If a Calamity Priest's enemy entered such a state, they were extremely prone to

making errors. It caused the calamity to snowball and eventually devour them.

And at Sequence 5 Winner, Beyonders could control their luck to a certain extent. They could use their own temperance to accumulate large amounts of luck. At critical moments, they could dramatically reduce any dangers to their life multiple times. From time to time, they could also encounter beneficial situations that have extremely low probabilities in their daily lives. For example, due to someone's mistakes, they might receive an inheritance; the strange, comedic way they walked caused them to catch the fancy of a member of the opposite sex; or their enemies who were pursuing them would foolishly get lost or make errors in judgment.

At this level, Beyonders of the Fate pathway had a very keen sense of foresight. Be it divination or anti-divination, they were mysticism experts.

In addition, they could also give their enemies bad luck to a certain extent, making their targets become unlucky.

Beyonders of the Monster pathway are really extreme. Apart from the spirituality and fate domain, they almost have zero Beyonder powers. Even their constitution and calculation skills are provided at Robot. The subsequent advancements give rather limited improvements… This is my ideal model for a charlatan. They do not have any offensive or defensive abilities, simply relying on their premonition and how fate blesses them…

*I have to say that this is the most special path out of the 22 Beyonder pathways. I can find or guess their neighboring pathways. Only Monster seems rather asocial. It seems to be a lonely one… Perhaps, the Beyonder pathway that focuses on fate is destined to be lonely? *Klein silently reflected on the matter and had some ideas regarding the usage of his marionette.

Of course, he still needed to carry out divinations above the gray fog. He needed to see if the passive good luck and calamities still existed after the Beyonder's actual death.

If it really was present, Klein had to constantly face the trials of calamities.

*In comparison, Admiral of Blood Senor is still better as a marionette. Sigh, people only know how to cherish and regret once things are gone. *Klein shook his head in a self-deprecating chortle. From the traits of the Monster pathway, he thought of a few effective means to deal with their Mid- and Low-Sequence Beyonders.

First, it was to catch them by surprise to let them see him directly. They would directly see the gray fog or other images, causing them to suffer a catharsis of the mind and receive damage to their bodies, pushing them to the brink of losing control.

Second, it was to throw a special item out, causing them to face the test of seeing what shouldn't be seen and hear what shouldn't be heard. In this aspect, Klein had a blood crystal that came from a high-level Devil that could produce such an effect—Blatherer's aura.

Third, it was to entice them to give him bad luck and pretend to act unlucky so as to have an opportunity to strike back.

Amidst his thoughts, Klein made the marionette empty his pockets, producing 35 pounds 10 soli 7 pence and a leather wallet.

The wallet's surface and interior had a flower and name embroidered on it. It appeared to be completely handcrafted.

Enzo… Whether that's your name or not, your name is Enzo. Klein shot a glance at his marionette as he moved his gaze down to the golden ring with the inlaid emerald on his right hand.

Via divination, he learned that the ring was named Green Essence. It had one effect—treat any ailments or injuries that weren't too serious.

And it was precisely because of this that its negative effects were trivial; it only attracted mosquitoes.

Thankfully, I'm not the one wearing it… Hmm, Monster pathway Beyonders don't seem to wear many mystical items. Even if they do, they will wear one or two rather low-level ones. This is a requirement of fate? Klein retracted his gaze in thought and looked at Enzo who was staring at the wall. He had an urge grow within him.

He wished to use his Monster pathway marionette to look at himself. He wanted to know what was so special about him!

Will this be very dangerous? I'll lose control as a result even if I'm seeing myself? No, back in Tingen City, Ademisaul had also looked straight at me without being a Sequence 9. The only thing that happened was having his eyes bleed and be in a state of pain for a while…

Although I have improved drastically from then, Winner Enzo didn't directly break down when he saw me just now. The reaction resembled my reaction when seeing Demoness of Despair Panatiya's partial Mythical Creature form.

Do a divination above the gray fog? No, that involves the gray fog itself. The outcome will definitely be interfered with… Rely on my own divination powers in the real world? Klein took out a gold coin and let it run through his fingers.

After a while, the gold coin bounced up and fell down into Klein's palm.

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CHAPTER 911
STRANGE SCENE

Klein looked down at his palm as his eyes reflected the gold coin.

It was heads.

This meant that Klein should use the marionette's eyes to look at himself!

After receiving this revelation, Klein remained hesitant. He pondered about holding a ritual to send Enzo above the gray fog. Doing so was relatively safer, allowing the damage and corruption his Spirit Body suffered to be completely screened by the environment before making an attempt.

However, he suspected that he wouldn't receive an outcome. This was because Beyonders of the Fate pathway were noticing the projection of the mysterious space on his body. Above the gray fog, that uniqueness might no longer exist. It was like an attempt to observe an elephant's body; instead of doing it outside, he was doing it internally.

Pressing his fingers together, he clenched the gold coin in silence for a long while before making up his mind.

He suddenly stood up, took out a ritual dagger, and created a wall of spirituality to isolate the room.

This was to prevent anyone from hearing the possible screams or strange commotion!

Immediately after that, Klein set up a ritual and sacrificed Creeping Hunger above the gray fog.

He was afraid that the glove would turn on him when something happened to him!

This was a fixed trait of Creeping Hunger itself. Once it didn't have its fill and couldn't secure a schedule of eating one person a day, it would view its wearer as food. And Klein starved it more often than he fed it.

After doing all the preparations in a meticulous and orderly manner, Klein reached out to take the Flower of Blood from Enzo and wore it on his left palm.

This ensured that he could recover even if he suffered any serious physical damage.

At the moment he was about to wear it, Klein thought for a moment and paused. Taking a piece of paper, he wrote: "Remember to take off the ring."

He was worried that he wouldn't take Flower of Blood off after his experiment due to his lowered intelligence.

When that happens, perhaps I need a beautiful princess to wake me up with a kiss, no—take off my ring… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh and exhaled. Removing his outerwear, he wore the ring.

Then, he cast his gaze at his new marionette, Winner Enzo.

The sense of crisis and nervousness was inevitable, but as long as he made up his mind, the experienced him could only forge ahead without flinching.

After doing some adjustments and entering a state of Cogitation, Klein made the marionette slowly turn around to look at him.

With the Winner's eyes, he first saw a layer of thin, emanating grayish-white fog.

Amidst the fog, there was a resplendent door of light that was tainted with bluish-blackness.

The door of light was formed from countless layers of spherical light. Each spherical light enveloped squirming maggots. Some of them were transparent, others translucent. They had complicated and indescribable symbols and patterns that had profound meanings.

Before Klein could discern the actual details, he felt his mind buzz as he lost consciousness.

After an unknown period of time, he slowly woke up. He had momentarily lost his memory, almost imagining that he had slept till daybreak.

What happened? It's still dark outside… Klein sat up with a push of his hands, only to realize that he was on the ground.

At this moment, he caught sight of Enzo through the corner of his eye. Plenty of scenes and voices suddenly surged through his mind.

That's right. I was trying to figure out what Beyonders of the Monster pathway can see from my body… I suffered too much stimulation and fainted immediately? I still vaguely remember painful screaming. Was that me? Klein, who had recovered his memories, hurriedly inspected his condition. He was surprised to see a bloody, gruesome wound on his body, as though something was about to tear out of it.

At this moment, flesh was squirming in the wound, reforming at an abnormally fast speed.

Klein then looked to the ground and saw that there was blood that had outlined a silhouette of where he was lying down.

Thankfully, I wore Flower of Blood; otherwise, I might've slowly died due to the heavy injuries brought about by the breakdown of my body. After I resurrect, I wonder if I'll be in a human form or a monster form… Klein

raised his hand and rubbed his temples as he scanned his surroundings. He found that the furniture had toppled, but the wall of spirituality remained intact.

He heaved a sigh of relief, confirming that the abnormality was only limited to himself and a small area around him. Nothing had spread.

And from the speed at which his wound was recovering at, Klein determined that he hadn't been unconscious for more than a minute.

He picked up the chair and sat down, feeling as though he had forgotten something, but he just couldn't recall what.

Only when he instinctively cleared the area did he see a note with the words: "Remember to take off the ring." Only then was he enlightened as he removed the golden ruby ring on his left hand.

More memories surfaced as Klein shook his head and muttered with a lingering sense of fear and amusement, "Luck is really important at times. If the negative effects of the Flower of Blood randomly reached its peak potency, I might not be able to recognize those words and fail to be reminded…"

Seeing that he had mostly recovered from his wound, he made Enzo wear Flower of Blood and take off Green Essence.

Using the latter's treatment, Klein no longer felt any discomfort. He focused his attention back on the scene he saw. It was a scene that Beyonders of the Fate pathway saw on him.

A door of light tainted with bluish-black. Countless spherical lights. Transparent and translucent maggots clumped together. Symbols and patterns that are mystically complicated, hiding plenty of knowledge but giving zero feedback to others… What do these represent?

This is a particular Mythical Creature form that corresponds to the mysterious space above the gray fog? It's one that belongs to a Sequence 0 true god?

Due to the gray fog's screening, only Beyonders of the Fate pathway can see it directly, suffering the visual impact and corruption? Likewise, it's also because of the gray fog's screening that those Beyonders don't directly break down as though they are seeing a deity with their own eyes while also not receiving any knowledge?

Klein thought for a moment and began to use divination to decipher the hidden meaning.

The door of light seems to resemble the symbol behind the Apprentice's chair. It might also point to Mr. Door…

Countless stacked spherical light is identical to my Cogitation. And the latter stems from the mythical systems as described by some novels from Earth… Influenced, my subconscious chose the most relevant and closely-matching memory? Or could it be that my choice influences the expression of the scene from the gray fog?

The distorted and transparent maggots are similar to the clump of maggots on the gigantic throne on the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range, but there are some tiny differences. That's Sequence 0 The Fool of the Seer pathway? I didn't manage to see the translucent ones clearly. It's hard to tell…

Also, the bluish-black color keeps making me connect it to the depths of the mysterious space that I can't reach… Back when I stood on the highest step of the staircase of light, I could see some hints of bluish-black on the cloud-like mass that condensed in midair…

Klein thought about it for quite some time but failed to receive an answer. All he could do was keep it at the back of his mind and analyze it when he had more information and clues.

After clearing the scene, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. He planned on doing a thorough inspection of his physical condition and confirm if Enzo still had any passive luck or bad luck.

…

Bayam. In the poverty district, in a dilapidated house that wasn't too big.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya was sitting behind a table looking at the door when she heard a unique knocking pattern on the door.

"Come on in." She didn't deliberately disguise her voice.

The wooden door creaked open as The Hanged Man walked in, wearing a hooded black robe.

Seeing his suspicious disguise, Cattleya nudged her heavy glasses and said with a smile, "If you were to walk out like this, you would be surrounded by the members of the Church of Storms within five minutes."

She didn't wear any disguise because she knew that the matter of her permitting Gehrman Sparrow to board the Future had long spread across the seas. It wasn't difficult for The Hanged Man to guess that Admiral of Stars was Ma'am Hermit.

Alger didn't directly reply to her. As he closed the door, he pulled out a chair and snapped back, "It's the same for you."

He meant that Admiral of Stars was just second to Admiral Hell amongst the seven pirate admirals. Furthermore, she was suspected to have deep connections to Gehrman Sparrow. She was a target of pursuit by the Church of Storms and Church of Evernight. Her bounty had risen to 45,000 pounds, and no matter which city she was in, it only spelled trouble once she was recognized due to not being disguised.

Cattleya nodded slightly and turned to look at The Hanged Man's hooded face.

"In front of me, such a disguise is meaningless.

"However, I respect your choice."

She continued wearing her glasses.

She has a domineering stance and great confidence. As expected of the Admiral of Stars… Alger, who was wearing a mask under the hood, didn't harp on the disguise as he went straight to the point.

"Thank you for providing me with assistance."

Cattleya placed her right hand on her left elbow.

"I'm curious. With your present strength and the resources you have, you should be able to resolve the Artisan's problem even without my help. Why are you being excessive?"

Alger was already prepared as he succinctly replied, "I do not wish to become a topic of discussion for others."

Cattleya seemed to grasp the meaning in between the lines. Pondering for a few seconds, she said, "I need more information."

Alger nodded lightly and said, "According to my observations and guesses, the Artisan is likely controlled by those who believe in the Primordial Moon. The latter belong to the original faction of the Southern Continent, not the traitors of the Life School of Thought."

Cattleya's expression remained unperturbed as she thought for a moment.

"Why don't you find Mr. Moon? He should be very interested in such matters."

Alger curled his lips and replied in a normal tone, "If we aren't able to resolve it, I might do so."

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CHAPTER 912
ORIGINS OF THE ARTISAN

Cattleya understood The Hanged Man. If the problem was too serious, they could use The Moon to involve the entire Sanguine race. They could then minimize their losses in the chaos and obtain some benefits.

She then smiled and said, "If the situation is that serious, why not directly find The World? That seems to make things simple."

Alger remained silent for a few seconds before saying, "I have to prove my ability at handling problems; therefore, that's the final resort."

After hearing his reply, Cattleya immediately made some connections.

The Hanged Man places great importance on the way Gehrman Sparrow views him. It's because he's a Blessed of Mr. Fool? Also, his attitude is rather identical to the political jokes of Backlund and Trier. When facing a problem or having committed a mistake, the first reaction is to suppress the matter and find other methods to resolve it. They cannot let their superior or consignor know about it…

This means that The Hanged Man was once or is currently a member of a powerful faction with a strict hierarchy. It influenced him and made him grasp similar traits… The Church of Storms? No, such a person would be an oddity… The fleet of the King of the Five Seas?

Amidst her thoughts, the pirate admiral nudged her heavy glasses and steered the topic back.

"Continue describing the Artisan."

Alger appeared to have prepared a script. Without any thought or pause, he said in an unhurried manner, "To hide this Artisan's identity, to prevent this resource from being wielded by others, I deliberately constructed the identity of him being part of the Church of Steam. But in fact, he had no choice but to create items for unaffiliated Beyonders to earn money to maintain his lifestyle of enjoying fine wine and beauties. He betrayed the Church of Steam and hid in Bayam.

"This time, he first contracted a strange disease and was monitored by an unknown person. Later, he seemed to be under control of people who believe in the Primordial Moon, claiming that he could receive new life…"

Cattleya finished listening attentively as her eyes with a purple tint appeared extremely focused.

After The Hanged Man finished his recount, she pondered and asked, "An Artisan definitely has no lack of mystical items. Furthermore, they know all the combinations of different Beyonder effects and negative effects. Their strength is definitely at Sequence 5.

"What methods did those Primordial Moon believers use to control this Artisan without harming him?

"A demigod was involved?"

Alger slowly shook his head.

"There aren't any clues regarding that, but based on my observation, the Artisan has expressed some willingness. I suspect that, while being threatened and coerced, there are elements of them targeting his weaknesses to entice him."

He had indirectly denied the theory that a demigod was involved.

Cattleya nodded.

"How did those Primordial Moon believers find this Artisan?

"Based on your description, this Artisan only trades with trustworthy friends he's familiar with. He doesn't enjoy widening his channels, and he can be said to be extremely cautious."

Alger hesitated for a moment and said, "I'm not too sure, but I have a theory.

"I once helped The World sell a Werewolf Beyonder characteristic to that Artisan, and the Werewolf pathway belongs to the Mutant pathway. Be it the formulas or characteristics, they are firmly in the control of the Rose School of Thought. There are seldom any leaks."

Likewise, those people who believe in the Primordial Moon in the Southern Continent basically belong to the Rose School of Thought… Cattleya added inwardly, having figured out The Hanged Man's theory.

He suspected that the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic had a latent problem that involved a secret existence. This resulted in the Artisan being targeted by the Rose School of Thought!

And this was also the reason why the Rose School of Thought firmly wielded control over the Mutant pathway's formula and characteristics.

Cattleya raised a few more questions and obtained satisfactory answers. Finally, she asked, "What's that Artisan's name? What country is he from?"

"He's from Intis. He calls himself Cielf," Alger replied straight away.

"Cielf…" Cattleya frowned slightly as she repeated the Artisan's name softly.

What's wrong with that? Upon seeing this, Alger directly asked, "You've heard of him?"

From Alger's point of view, Admiral of Stars was an experienced powerhouse with a powerful background and was good at controlling herself. If she hadn't wished to discuss Cielf, she wouldn't have made it so clear even if she had her suspicions and questions. Due to this, he chose to ask without mincing his words.

After a moment of silence, Cattleya said, "Emperor Roselle's eldest son is Ciel. It's very similar to that name."

Without waiting for The Hanged Man to say a word, she continued, "This prince passed away due to his horror and concerns shortly after the emperor's assassination. Back then, the Sauron family wished to hang or exile his descendants, but the Church of Steam chose to take him in as a clergyman."

Alger nodded slightly in enlightenment.

"You suspect that he's a descendent of that prince?"

In most countries in the Northern Continent like Intis and Feysac, it was common for people to use their ancestor's name or something similar as their names. It represented the legacy of honor; therefore, the more illustrious a family was, the more common it was to have "the second" or "the third."

Of course, it was also very common for two people to have similar names, but Artisan Cielf wasn't only a name. He was from the Church of Steam, a person from Intis, and had reached the level of Artisan.

Faced with The Hanged Man's question, Cattleya nodded gently.

"I can quickly make a confirmation if you can obtain his blood."

Understanding the reason, Alger didn't ask further. Instead, he asked, "Are you going to take action now? I can provide support."

Cattleya's glasses reflected the crimson moonlight that shone inwards.

"No, I plan on observing for some time.

"At the very least, we need to understand why the people who believe in the Primordial Moon are trying to control Artisan Cielf.

"If they only wish to get the Artisan to work for them and create mystical items, the situation becomes a lot more simple. And if they have other goals, the problem might be more complicated than we imagined. We will need to make more preparations."

As expected of the Admiral of Stars… Alger nodded and said, "I can't stay in Bayam for too long, or else I will incur suspicion. If you need my assistance, it needs to be fast."

After receiving confirmation from her, The Hanged Man slowly got up and pulled up his hood before leaving the room.

Having learned where Artisan Cielf was presently living, Cattleya removed her heavy glasses and pinched her glabella. Clapping, she said, "Heath, come in."

In the shadows of the door gap, the darkness suddenly stirred as a thin and tall but pale figure appeared.

His nose bridge was ridiculously high, and his facial skin was nearly transparent. Looking ill, he was none other than the second mate of the Future, Rose Bishop Heath Doyle.

Cattleya looked at him and said, "The actual situation is… I'll leave the rest to you."

"Yes, Captain." Heath Doyle simply replied before shrinking back into the shadows.

Cattleya raised her right hand and paused for a few seconds.

"Stay—Stay away from Frank for the time being. He had reached a standstill in his mushroom experiments. I'm afraid that he will come up with new ideas."

…

"The location of my second marionette…”

Klein held two branches as he repeatedly chanted without seeing them move.

This meant a divination failure or that Kolain City didn't have a second marionette that suited him well.

From the looks of it, mysticism methods are temporarily useless. I'll pack up tomorrow and leave… Klein mumbled and threw the branches into the trash can.

Standing beside him was Enzo. Although he didn't dare to directly look at his master and was only looking at the ground, he skilfully made a cup of black tea and offered it to Klein.

Compared to before, this Winner now had red skin that was nearly peeling due to sunburn. After all of this turned for the better, he would have a swarthy tan.

To disguise his new marionette and prevent the Rose School of Thought from recognizing him, Klein had brought this gentleman on a trip to the beach which received strong sunlight. He was then left exposed to the sun for prolonged periods of time.

Meanwhile, he controlled the marionette to shave off most of his hair, leaving a thin layer. With the trimming of his brows, contouring his face with powder, and wearing shades, Enzo seemed to transform into another

person. Even the most familiar of friends of his might find it difficult to recognize him unless the person was a Faceless.

Apart from a disguise in the real world, Klein also did some mysticism management. Firstly, he used the Paper Angel's embrace, and second, he carried Azik's copper whistle along with it.

In addition, he also determined that a Winner's passive luck and calamity trait was ineffective. However, he had no idea if it was because of its status as a marionette, or if it was due to the gray fog.

Receiving the tea and taking a sip, Klein cast his gaze at the map of East and West Balam on the coffee table. He considered where he could find his second marionette.

At this moment, the colors around him suddenly saturated as though an artist had contoured the area with paint.

Right on the heels of that, a figure appeared beside Enzo. He was wearing a silk top hat and a black suit. With a medium build, he had bronze skin and eyes that seemed to see the vicissitudes of life. He had soft facial features, and beneath his right ear was a tiny black mole. He was none other than Azik Eggers.

Mr. Azik is finally here… Klein was first delighted before he noticed that he had appeared beside his marionette.

This made an amusing scene surface in his mind.

Mr. Azik, who had relied on the copper whistle to locate him, had done the same as he usually did—grabbing the copper whistle's wielder by the shoulder and had left using the spirit world the moment he appeared. And all Klein could do was watch helplessly, trying to stop him with outstretched arms. But being a tad bit slow, he couldn't help but clam up.

Azik appeared more reticent than before. Looking at Klein who had a new face, he asked, "Are you ready?"

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CHAPTER 913
KLEIN'S PREPARATORY WORK

Ready… Of course not… Klein smiled as he pointed at Enzo.

"That glove still needs sealing."

As he spoke, the badly sunburnt Enzo removed the human-skinned glove from his right hand with his left hand which wore the Flower of Blood and Green Essence rings.

It was Creeping Hunger.

Normally, Klein tended to throw Creeping Hunger above the gray fog when it wasn't in use. After all, the glove's original seal had been disabled after its mutation. It needed to consume a living person on a daily basis; otherwise, it would feast on the wearer. However, considering how Mr. Azik had already replied, it was very likely that he would meet him soon. Finally, he decided to keep Creeping Hunger in the real world unless there were unique circumstances.

After all, he could already imagine the scene of Mr. Azik arriving. He didn't wish for such a conversation to happen.

"Didn't you say that the glove needs sealing?"

"Yes. Give me a second. I need to use the washroom."

Or:

"Are you ready?"

“…No. Give me a second. I need to use the washroom."

Just the thought of a similar scene and similar line embarrassed Klein, making him feel awkward. Even if he didn't consider the possibility of Mr. Azik realizing the secret of the gray fog, this would also affect his impression of him.

Therefore, after obtaining a new marionette and completing his attempt at looking at himself, Klein brought Creeping Hunger back to the real world, making up for its previous meal.

Unlike before, the wearer was now Enzo.

Aside from that, to restrain Creeping Hunger's urge to eat a person on a daily basis, Klein carried a few normal mushrooms with him. He also made the marionette maintain a distance of at least five meters from him.

Upon hearing his words and seeing the marionette's actions, Azik nodded and reached out to receive the human-skinned glove.

Taking this opportunity, Klein took out a few mushrooms from his pocket and threw them into the nearby trash can.

Pa!

He snapped his fingers, igniting the mushrooms within a scarlet flame. However, it didn't affect anything around it.

This was his Flame Controlling power from being a Magician.

After completing this action and seeing Mr. Azik inevitably glance over, Klein chuckled dryly.

"The unforeseen development back then has made Creeping Hunger a little afraid of mushrooms. I'm using its weakness to restrain its usual urges."

In fact, there wasn't much point in doing so because carrying the mushrooms restrained Creeping Hunger. It made the starving Sealed Artifact immediately lash back the moment the mushrooms disappeared. Unless there was any easily obtainable "food" in front of it, it would end up aiding the enemy.

"Mushroom…" Azik muttered as he held the glove which had blood stains on its surface. He made the surroundings suddenly turn dark as the sunlight outside was prohibited from entering.

Ghastly-white, dark-green complicated symbols, labels, and patterns appeared out of thin air. They appeared to be calligraphed by invisible wraiths, shadows, and spirit bodies.

They meshed together in midair, forming a mysterious, illusory double bronze door that seemed to lead to another world. It was a deep, silent, and terrifying world.

The illusory door shrank and finally landed on Creeping Hunger, causing its blood stains to rapidly recede, making it mostly white.

A few seconds later, this human-skinned glove returned to normal. It was still a thin layered glove, and even without any suppressive effect from the mushrooms, it didn't express any signs of mania or urges.

"It's like how it was before." Azik handed Creeping Hunger to Klein.

Having a bigshot backing you sure feels good! Klein reflected inwardly and earnestly thanked him before wearing Creeping Hunger on his left hand.

He thought for a moment and raised a matter.

"Mr. Azik, while I was carrying your copper whistle while passing through the Berserk Sea, I had the same dream repeatedly.

"The main theme of the dream is darkness and coldness. In an inverted underground mausoleum, there were countless coffins with a deceased body inside. On their backs were dense white feathers.

"Those feathers were tainted with pale yellow oil, and deep inside the mausoleum was a blob of black fog that enveloped everything.

"In the dream, you and I were exploring the mausoleum. We triggered something, causing the black fog to produce panting sounds as thin illusory black tubes were extended.

"I would jolt myself awake whenever I reach this point in the dream. This seems to be similar to the byproduct of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project that previously appeared."

Klein described, in detail, his divination of the copper whistle as a dream; he did this as a warning to Mr. Azik as if to say that he shouldn't be too careless. After all, dream divination was, in a sense, equivalent to a dream, and Azik knew that he was a Beyonder of the Seer pathway. Having such an encounter wasn't anything odd.

Having a revelation from a normal dream and getting a revelation from a dream divination only differed in one way: one being passive and the other active.

Azik finished listening silently without cutting Klein off. At the end of that, he nodded and said, "It's likely related to something Death left in the Berserk Sea.

"From the looks of it, the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project has had some qualitative progress."

Mr. Azik lives up to being a Fourth Epoch Death Consul. He doesn't belittle my dream at all… Klein raised his right hand and rubbed his face, turning into Gehrman Sparrow.

He then said, "I only have one more thing I need to prepare. I need to confirm if Admiral Hell Ludwell isn't somewhere dangerous and that there aren't any Numinous Episcopate demigods around him."

As for whether the Murloc Cufflink was still on the ship, Klein didn't mention it. This was because he would check on it every few days. He believed that Admiral Hell had yet to discover the mystical item, or he might've already discovered it but had deliberately not moved it, hoping to lay an ambush for the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, when he visited.

Azik replied calmly, "That can be confirmed when we are nearby."

"Alright." Klein immediately made Enzo walk to the coat rack and pull out the golden cane.

Seeing that there was nothing else, Azik reached out his right hand and grabbed Klein's shoulder.

Klein also reached out his right palm to grab onto Enzo's shoulder.

The surrounding colors suddenly changed. The reds became redder, and the blacks became blacker. They stacked against each other but were bright and discordant.

The two men and the marionette began passing through the spirit world as the black gold inlaid cane danced ahead, pointing out the direction of Klein's lost Murloc Cufflink.

Before long, the cane fell down and was suspended in midair. Azik terminated the traveling, but they remained in the spirit world.

He seemed to be watching something or listening in on something. After two to three seconds, he said, "There aren't any problems."

With that said, he brought Klein while Klein brought his marionette out of the spirit world.

Meanwhile, Klein recalled the time he searched for clues to Azik's memories. Back then, the target was the ancient chronicles that Vice Admiral Ailment Tracy possessed.

Back then, Azik had said "the problem isn't serious," but in the end, he faced Demoness of Unaging Katarina…

There aren't any problems… Alright, since you say so… Klein lampooned as he sized up his surroundings.

It was a rather familiar environment. It was a huge ship with a mainly dark color with a ghostly green to it. It had a Black Tulip flag, as well as zombies, skeletons, wraiths, shadows, and other undying creatures; these creatures either directed the sails, patrolled the area, or did cannon drills. All of that proved that it was the flagship, Black Tulip, of Admiral Hell.

Unlike Klein's last encounter, the Black Tulip had quite a number of living Beyonders.

The silver-masked captain with an exaggerated rapier, frilly shirt, a gorgeous coat, and a triangular hat with a white skull on it, Admiral Hell Ludwell, was standing by the cabin's entrance looking over.

Suddenly, the black ring on Ludwell's right hand trembled and glimmered.

The pale white flame in the arrogant pirate admiral's eyes wavered and finally constricted to its limits.

Immediately, Ludwell bent his back, prostrated to the ground in front of Azik Eggers, and kissed the deck under the gaze of the either glazed, surprised, or lifeless eyes.

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CHAPTER 914
THE CALLING DEEP INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM

"…”

Upon seeing Admiral Hell Ludwell's reaction, Klein and the living crew of the Black Tulip could hardly believe their eyes.

He originally imagined two scenarios:

The first was Ludwell requesting help from a Numinous Episcopate demigod to ambush Gehrman Sparrow and the powerhouse backing him. This wasn't impossible since Sequence 7 of the Death pathway was called Spirit Medium. They also had the ability to sense impending danger.

The second was that Admiral Hell hadn't made any preparations. He tried resisting but ended up being easily finished off by Mr. Azik.

Klein's plan was to have Mr. Azik deal with the demigod while he hunted Admiral Hell in the first scenario, so as to obtain his second marionette. If it were the second scenario, he could request Mr. Azik to watch by the side as he controlled his marionette to challenge Ludwell alone. During this process, he would use Creeping Hunger and hide in the shadows, doing his best to stay behind the scenes so as to digest his Marionette potion faster.

To his surprise, Admiral Hell didn't put up a fight at all. He directly prostrated himself and kissed the deck as though he was Azik's most loyal and humble servant.

How are we going to come to blows now… Klein stared ahead blankly, somewhat at a loss for words.

And it was silent across the ship.

Azik raised his hand and pressed down on his silk hat as he walked towards the prostrating Ludwell at a decent pace.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. He stopped in front of Ludwell and said with a deep voice, "What stage has the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project reached?"

Ludwell kept his forehead peeled to the ground as he hoarsely replied, "Artificial Death can already influence High-Sequence Beyonders who failed their advancements, but it is still unable to reply to prayers and rituals…”

After the description, he slightly raised his torso and took off the black, square-shaped ring from his right hand. Then, with both hands, he offered it in front of him.

Silently, the ring seemed to be dragged by countless spirit bodies as it flew up and landed in Azik's palm.

Azik studied it for a few seconds before wearing it on his left index finger.

Suddenly, a terrifying and profound feeling was emanated from his body. The zombies and skeletons who were either naked or wearing rotten leather armor, genuflected, bowing their heads as though they only dared to look at his boots. The flying wraiths and shadows landed on the deck and clung closely to it. None of them dared to float in midair again.

The other pirates aboard the ship plopped to their knees, plastering their faces to the deck without daring to raise them.

Klein stood to the side, watching Mr. Azik's back and the suddenly empty scene. He turned agape, but he didn't say a word.

Azik took another two steps forward and came to Admiral Hell's side. Then, he turned his body and faced Klein and said to Ludwell, "You shall be his marionette for a year. When the time is up, you can return to the spirit world."

Azik said those words without any inflection, as though he wasn't determining Admiral Hell's life and death or future. Perhaps, to him, this was a trivial matter that didn't need him to care for the thoughts and feelings of the person being ordered.

Ludwell's body shook violently as though he was furious and indignant. But ultimately, he didn't raise his head. He continued keeping his head peeled to the deck.

"Yes, honorable Death Consul."

Just as he said that, ghastly white and dark green mysterious symbols were accentuated as they meshed together, forming an illusory bronze door.

The door rapidly contracted and was imprinted inside Admiral Hell's forehead.

Klein looked in surprise and puzzlement. Only when Mr. Azik nodded at him and pointed to Admiral Hell did he blankly step forward and enter a ten-meter-radius. He began controlling Ludwell's Spirit Body Threads.

The pirate admiral almost leaped up a few times to flail his arms, but none of that happened. Soon, his thoughts turned sluggish as he subconsciously resisted.

After a while, the silver-masked Admiral Hell Ludwell stood up. Bowing his head, he retreated to Klein's side and stood beside Winner Enzo.

Azik watched the entire process in silence before finally slowly saying, "In the Death pathway, high-level Beyonders have extremely suppressive powers over low-level Beyonders."

…I can tell. Back when I threw your copper whistle, even the Sequence 5 Admiral Hell failed to control his undead creatures.… Klein nodded gently, indicating that he had taken note of it.

Immediately after that, a zombie which had rotted in several areas rose up. Carrying an azure-blue cufflink, it came before Klein.

It was the Murloc Cufflink he had lost!

Although it's useless for the current me, I've finally gotten it back… As Klein was lost in poignancy, he reached out to retrieve the item that belonged to him.

Then, he saw Mr. Azik walk back and reach out to grab his shoulder.

He hurriedly extended his arms to grab onto the shoulders of his marionettes, Enzo and Ludwell.

All the colors saturated, brightened, and overlapped. Having entered the spirit world, Klein instinctively asked, "Mr. Azik, where do we go next?"

"Berserk Sea," Azik calmly replied.

He paused for a moment and then added, "Give me the copper whistle."

“…Alright." Klein made Enzo take out the iron cigar case and retrieve the ancient cigar case.

Azik reached out and took it before saying in a deep voice, "My intuition tells me that this ring left by Death, together with this copper whistle and myself, should allow us to find the spot in the Berserk Sea where Death perished back then."

Klein subconsciously said, "My dream tells me that it's very dangerous.

"Perhaps we should first find the Numinous Episcopate members who are implementing the Artificial Death Project. We can make decisions after receiving more detailed information from them."

Azik fell silent for a few seconds.

"A voice there is calling out to me."

Klein turned his head to look at Mr. Azik. He saw that this man with soft facial features and weathered eyes had his facial contours furrowed. He no longer had that slight curve to his lips.

Colors flashed by quickly as Azik brought Klein through the pitch-black storm that enveloped the Berserk Sea.

At this moment, the dark square ring and the exquisite ancient brass whistle shimmered slightly, illuminating Azik's face.

This Death Consul who had lived through the Fourth Epoch closed his eyes as he silently listened to a shout that came from an unknown location. Then, he suddenly clenched his right hand.

All the scenery from the nearby spirit world was imploding, turning into a slowly-spinning black vortex whose borders couldn't be seen.

The vortex suddenly burgeoned, devouring Azik, Klein, and his two marionettes.

Klein sensed a sudden and intense sense of dizziness as he nearly vomited on the spot.

He recovered after an unknown period of time, realizing that he was inside a dark, cold mausoleum. Around him were open coffins, and inside them were rotting corpses with white feathers on their backs.

Although I warned Mr. Azik, we still ended up here… Klein was taken aback for a second as he suddenly felt a deep sense of helplessness.

He turned his head to look to the side and saw Azik standing near him. He was staring intently at the flights of stairs that led deep into the mausoleum.

There was a thick black gas emanating in the area as they slowly swirled like smog.

"The one hiding in there might very well be Artificial Death…" Klein couldn't help but warn.

Azik's facial contours were no longer as taut as he curved the corners of his mouth.

"My slumber from before has allowed me to recall many more things. I saw myself seated on a bone throne, and I saw Beyonders and ordinary people lying dead in front of the throne. They hadn't done anything wrong, but they died sudden deaths all the same. One by one, they got up, turning into ghastly undead creatures, undead creatures that pledged allegiance to me.

"And I was just coldly watching them without any emotional fluctuations. I allowed the disaster to spread through the village and into the city.

"This made me feel unlike myself. However, I also knew very well that this might be the real me."

As Death Consul from the Fourth Epoch's Balam Empire…? Klein's lips quivered slightly before he pursed them tightly.

Azik rubbed his temples and continued in an unperturbed tone, "I sense myself returning to that past."

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CHAPTER 915
ANOTHER "ME"

Without waiting for Klein's reply, Azik, who was staring intently deep into the mausoleum, continued, "I still remember my resurrection after my first death. I was lying in a pale-white coffin, and I staggered to my feet. I was feeling horrified, having no idea what was happening. Nor did I know where I was.

"Before the clergymen collected my corpse for purification, I escaped, stumbling along the way like a wandering ghost. I crossed grasslands, villagers, and cities. I couldn't recall who I was or where I came from.

"No matter where I went back then, I would hear all kinds of sobbing. When I watched priests presiding over mass burials, I felt sorrow in every corner.

"Later, I happened to rescue a noble lady and entered her manor. She was a bright and lively girl, and I was like a feral beast from the jungle. I was sensitive, suspicious, self-abased, afraid; and I often showed a cold, indifferent, cruel side that didn't match the morality of a human.

"She was very curious about me. No matter how I avoided her or what terrible things I did, she would approach me, infecting me with her smile. She would use interesting matters to influence me, and without realizing it, I got used to her pranks and her existence.

"We secretly got together. She was very worried that her father wouldn't agree to her marriage to a former tramp and present servant.

"Seeing her melancholic smile, I had the feeling of blood gushing through me for the first time. I rashly told her that I was leaving, but I would return with an aristocratic title and a bridal garland.

"I joined the army, becoming a knight. I raised a three-meter lance and charged at enemies. Thanks to the chaos of the Fourth Epoch's wake in the Northern Continent, I became a baron and obtained a fief I could call my own.

"I abided by my promise, and with the king's conferment letter, family emblem, a knight's medal ribbon, and my self-made garland, I married my bride."

Upon saying this, Azik's expression gradually turned gentle. as though he was reminiscing and recalling something. The corners of his mouth curled up without him realizing it.

Klein's heart stirred from hearing this, as though he had met the familiar Mr. Azik again.

"What happened next?" He carefully guided the conversation.

Azik looked ahead and said, "Later… later, we built a castle on our fief. We had children, a boy. He grew up very quickly, and I could tell that he would grow up to be tall and stout.

"He enjoyed combat, often running around while dragging a broadsword, claiming that he wanted to become a knight.

"I thought it was just child's talk that wouldn't last. However, even if he broke his leg or hurt his head, he didn't abandon his training. He thought that I wouldn't be able to see him if he hid in his room grimacing while tending to his wound. Heh heh, he underestimated his father. All the spirits in the fief were secretly under my service.

"Year after year passed. I recovered more and more of my memories. My wife often grumbled that the castle was too cold and dark and that she wished to go somewhere with sunlight and warmth. I satisfied her request, but it was only much later that I realized that it wasn't because she disliked staying in the castle, but that she was afraid of the changes happening to me. She was afraid of the colder me who was becoming a stranger.

"She never told me these things, spending time with me like she always did. We spent a beautiful time by the seaside in the south, and we even thought of having a second child, but unfortunately, we didn't succeed.

"It was only when I sensed that my next death was approaching did I return to the fief, to my castle.

"My son, that boy told me that he wished to head to Backlund to become an attendant to viscounts or earls and begin his journey as a knight.

"I asked him why he had made such a choice when he was only around ten. He told me that I was his idol and role model. He wished to become a noble by being a knight like me without the help of his parents.

"Back then, I had already recovered most of my memories. Faced with that child, I always felt a little awkward, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable. But when I heard his answer, I still felt an indescribable joy, satisfaction, and pride. He was my son, completely different from the children I had back when I was in the Balam Empire."

Klein knew that Mr. Azik was talking about his identity as Baron Lamud I. And the child who made him proud and satisfied had been poisoned to death in his middle-age or advanced years. He was nailed in a coffin and even had his skull taken away by Ince Zangwill.

Azik's gaze went adrift for a moment.

"I died once again and woke up in a groggy manner. I instinctively left my fief and followed my prior arrangements to wander elsewhere. Every

incarnation, I had a different life in the beginning. At times, I met with the sweetest love; at other times I received the most adorable daughter. The love, helplessness, and satisfaction left me taken aback, puzzled, and stumped again and again as I gradually recovered my memories.

"There was once a time where I was a filial son. I gave my parents pride, a beautiful life, adorable grandsons and granddaughters. But when I 'awoke' and found myself, I recalled that in my previous incarnation, I had coldly watched their real son die in the battlefield and had seized his identity. On the one hand, I felt pain and guilt, and on the other hand, I felt it was nothing, something trivial. My inner heart seemed to dissociate into two.

"Back then, I had a mask that allowed me to change into anyone, but I lost it after awakening. This might have been something I deliberately lost…"

Klein recalled Mr. Azik's mention of a daughter who liked getting sweets from him. After some deliberation, he asked, "I believe that it isn't a dissociation, but that you are fighting against madness.

"After losing your past memories, you, who restart your life, are always kind and warm, with rich emotions. At your present state, you probably recognize it even clearer.

"This might very well be the true you, your essence. And as a Death Consul, you suffer the effects of the Beyonder characteristic's latent inclination towards losing control. You suffer the influence brought about by a high-level Death pathway Beyonder. I heard that 'He' had already gone mad after the War of the Four Emperors."

Klein's words weren't without much evidence, because he only knew a few of Azik's incarnations—Baron Lamud, the father who made a swing for his daughter, the filial child, and the warm and friendly history teacher.

His goal was to provide a guess, a possibility to help Mr. Azik resist the Death Consul personality that came with his memories. It allowed him to

introspect his past incarnations and use this to achieve a particular compromise with himself that wouldn't be too cold.

And as he spoke, he suddenly had a new idea. Without waiting for Azik to finish digesting what he had said, he hurriedly asked, "Mr. Azik, do you know about an 'anchor'? To secure 'Themselves', the deities and angels use anchors to prevent the Beyonder characteristic's inclination towards losing control and stop madness from corrupting 'Them'."

"Yes." Azik retracted his gaze and nodded.

Klein wasn't too sure, but he used a rather firm tone and said, "Perhaps, your repeated memory loss to restart and live a new life is the anchor you use to resist madness and the loss of control!"

Do not abandon them. Do not forget them. That is you! After saying that, Klein added inwardly.

"Anchor…" Azik repeated this word as his mind seemed lost.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly sighed.

"This might be an explanation. At least, it lessens the intensity of my mental dissociation and conflicts.

"However, since I've already come this far, I should still head inside the mausoleum to see what's hiding there. Why is it summoning me, and what is causing me to die and revive again and again, losing my memories during the process only to find them again…

"This has troubled me for more than a thousand years. It has troubled my every incarnation. I believe I can receive an answer today."

The look in his eyes turned clearer as his voice seemed gentle, but there was an indescribable firmness in it.

Klein wanted to stop him, but moments after he opened his mouth, he closed it again.

Azik pressed down on his half top hat. Without turning his head, he said with a gentle smile, "Remember to close your eyes."

With that said, he walked forward, following the flights of stairs as he headed for the deep depths of the mausoleum.

The wafting black fog didn't produce any more panting sounds. It slowly scattered into its surroundings, accentuating the illusory object that was coiled at the bottom.

It was a massive feathered serpent that seemed to occupy an entire island!

It had huge, dark green—nearly black—scales. Amidst the gaps were feathers covered in yellow oily stains. On every feather, there were thin illusory black tubes extending outwards.

The exaggerated feathered serpent was both illusory and real, its actual form was hardly describable. It seemed to be a combination of things incomprehensible to humans.

Its eye sockets were burning with pale-white flames; its face was that of a human's!

The face had bronze skin, and it had soft facial features. Beneath its right ear was a tiny black mole. It was another Azik Eggers!

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CHAPTER 916
IRRESISTIBLE APPROACH

Upon seeing this coiling feathered serpent deep inside the black fog, and a face at the top of the towering figure, Azik was first taken aback. Following that, the corner of his forehead throbbed as though he had been struck in the temple, splitting his head in two.

Amidst the excruciating pain, several incontiguous scenes flashed in his mind;

It was a feathered serpent with a face identical to his, even to the smallest detail;

Above a silent land, there were countless pale corpses;

Floating in midair, there were clouds stacked from bones that came from different species;

Black tentacles that drilled out from the ground, with eyes that resembled dead fish at the tip of each tentacle;

A transparent Spirit Body was forcefully pulled out of his body.

After these flashing scenes, a pair of white flaming eyes that were on the brink of extinguishing glanced over. A white feather stained with yellow oil fluttered down, splitting Azik's transparent Spirit Body into two.

One of the parts suddenly flew up and plunged inside the "cloud of bones." The remaining part fused with a golden accessory that had appeared out of

thin air. Amidst the pale-white flames, it materialized back into a body of flesh and blood.

This scene was like a thunder god's hammer striking down at Azik's mind, again and again, making the pain hardly bearable. He raised his hand to his head as his knees gradually buckled as he knelt on the staircase.

He had finally recalled everything that had happened, and he understood the reason why he was constantly dying and reviving, always losing his memories and having to recover them every single time.

His soul wasn't complete!

Similarly, Azik also understood why the feathered serpent suppressing the entire space in the depths of the black fog had an identical face as his.

It was him!

That was the other Azik Eggers!

And all of this was a concealed attempt before Death's fall.

If stitching souls existed, there was naturally the splitting of souls. At that moment, the crazy and powerful Death had seemingly foreseen "His" outcome. Unwilling to die so simply, "He" secretly split the soul of his son, Balam Empire's Death Consul. He took half of it away and used another item as a replacement, stitching it together with Azik's soul.

It was a mystery if it was a deliberate arrangement of Death, or if it was an unintended consequence of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project, the half soul that had been taken away from Artificial Death had fused with the target of the Artificial Death Project—the Uniqueness of the Death pathway. It made the latter gain certain innate abilities as it began influencing High-Sequence Beyonders of the Corpse Collector pathway who had failed their advancement.

And for the other half, although there was a replacement that prevented it from being incomplete, the incomplete soul resulted in repeated deaths and resurrection just like Sequence 4's Undying. And due to the golden accessory inside his body, and the calling from the other half soul, Azik, who started a brand new life every incarnation, would gradually recover his past memories with the passage of time.

In the past, Artificial Death had attempted to identify the reason, but due to the natural recovery of his memories, he was often already close to death once more. He wasn't able to perform any in-depth investigations. Furthermore, the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death Project had been raised in the past few centuries. It was only in recent times that they received some level of success. That was why he never found the answer.

Haa! Haa! Haa!

At some point in time, Azik's hands had left his head. They were placed on the staircase as his throat produced a voice that didn't sound human.

Drops of sweat dripped down his forehead and hit the stone steps in front of him. They spread out into a layer of pale yellow oil, growing out into dense white feathers.

At that instant, he felt the other half of his soul calling out, as well as its desire. The two "selves" which had been separated for more than a thousand years were eager to fuse as one, to be whole again.

"No…” Azik muttered in pain, unwilling to raise his head or reach out his right hand.

He had seen it clearly. The "him" as a feathered serpent didn't have any reason. It was filled with extreme coldness and madness. If he became one with it again, he would probably immediately be restored to his state as a Death Consul from before. He might even become a fake Death who only had godhood with zero humanity!

He would forget everything, forgetting everyone who he had once cherished.

"No…” Azik's throat squeezed out the same word again. Irresistibly, he raised his neck bit by bit as pitch-black and gloomy scales appeared.

At his forehead, something that took a life of its own protruded out. His forehead cracked as a bloody opening appeared.

A golden sliver of light emitted out of nothingness, taking form inside the flesh and blood.

This ancient accessory made of gold was in the shape of a tall, slender bird. Pale white flames emanated around it in the form of feathers. Inside its bronze eyes, there were shimmering layers of light that separately formed a mysterious and illusory door.

The moment it appeared, Azik let out a painful growl. He raised his head completely as two wisps of pale-white flames burst in his eyes that had experienced much.

Deep inside the black fog, the illusory and real feathered serpent had straightened its body. It reached its head out as the two identical faces of different sizes looked at each other in silence.

As four pale-white flames leaped, bit by bit, Azik, whose hands were on the ground, struggled to stand up with a warped expression. Slowly, he walked to the feathered serpent known as Artificial Death.

As he approached, the entire mausoleum began shaking. The surroundings turned transparent, reflecting a world with countless skeletons and shadows.

Bloody arms, bluish-black vines with baby faces, and slimy tentacles with dead fish eyes or two rows of sharp teeth tore through the boundary between reality and the illusory, reaching into the mausoleum. However, they clung straight to the ground without daring to move.

…

East Balam, Kolain City.

Daly Simone, who was rushing to her next target's location, suddenly stopped in her steps and held her head.

"What's wrong?" Red Gloves team captain, Soest, asked in puzzlement.

Daly frowned slightly as she answered, seemingly in reverie, "I hear strange voices. I can sense the calling that stems from an unknown place… I even wish to kneel to the ground…"

"Can the rest of you hear it?" Soest prudently asked the other teammates.

Just as Leonard Mitchell shook his head, he heard the slightly-aged voice in his mind.

"Look towards the Berserk Sea."

Leonard subconsciously turned his body and looked in the direction of the harbor towards the distant Berserk Sea. He saw a swath of pure, deep-black darkness. There weren't any gales, massive waves, dark clouds, lightning, torrential rain, or sunlight.

…

Although Klein had his eyes closed, his outstanding spiritual perception allowed him to sense his surroundings. When he heard the painful murmurs and shouts that sounded like Mr. Azik, he could sense seemingly corporeal silence and the aura of death.

What's happening? Although the Artificial Death deep in the mausoleum didn't attack Mr. Azik, it has inflicted him with adverse effects? Klein's mind raced as he felt anxious and worried.

His spiritual intuition told him that what was about to happen was not something he wished to see.

However, he couldn't figure out what he could do. He didn't even dare open his eyes to look at Mr. Azik's present state or whatever he had encountered.

This wasn't a problem that could be solved with mere courage. It was a difference in the natural order of life, an unbridgeable gap.

Suddenly, Klein had a strong feeling of helplessness. However, he didn't give up as he tried hard to think of whatever items he had on him that could be of use.

Creeping Hunger? No, it's at a completely different level. It won't be of any use…

Death Knell? Even worse…

Groselle's Travels? I didn't bring it… Neither did I bring the Black Emperor card and Tyrant card…

Fate Siphon charm… Yes, the Fate Siphon charm!

Klein was delighted as he formulated a plan.

It was to use the Fate Siphon charm to temporarily swap his fate with Mr. Azik. He would suffer the influence created by Artificial Death in his place!

At the very least, I still have a chance of reviving. As for Mr. Azik, the deaths he previously suffered wouldn't from the damage inflicted. Who knows if he can awaken again in such a situation! Klein didn't consider if the Fate Siphon charm was effective on Azik and Artificial Death. He only wished to give it a try. He raised his right hand and reached into his pocket.

Then, there was a delay in his actions.

His arm rose a little before landing back in its original location.

He froze for a moment as though he had been petrified into being a stone sculpture.

Klein's lips quivered a few times as his expression distorted indiscernibly. Following that, he swung his right arm and reached his palm into his pocket and pulled it out.

Gripped tightly in his palm was a black crystal card-like charm.

At the same time, Azik was approaching the towering illusory feathered serpent. His footsteps sped up as though he was returning to his throne.

However, his eyes which had pale-white flames were filled with pain. His expression was extremely warped.

"No…" Azik muttered once again. Wherever his skin was exposed, white feathers stained with yellow oil grew out from the gaps of pitch-black scales.

The intense shouting and desire made him lose control of himself. He was about to soar into the sky and leap towards the gigantic feathered serpent that shared his face.

Pale-white flames spread out from the bird-shaped accessory at his forehead, flowing towards the rest of his body.

Klein's spiritual intuition was sending warnings as he hurriedly said a single word in ancient Hermes, "Fate!"

Just as he was about to use the charm, his surroundings suddenly quietened. There was no longer any sound.

A slender, fair female palm appeared out of nowhere and pressed down on the golden bird-shaped accessory on Azik's forehead.

A figure then materialized between Azik and the towering illusory feathered serpent, stopping the two's approach.

With the help of this external force, Azik finally held back that desire and the irresistible calling to fuse together. The pale-white flames in his eyes "reflected" the floating figure in midair.

It was a beautiful lady wearing an ancient robe. She wore a black hood. Her face was deadpan, and her black eyes were deep and dark, devoid of spirituality.

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CHAPTER 917
THREE CHOICES

The strange turn of events inside the mausoleum left Klein, who had his eyes closed and his spirituality converged, completely unaware of what was happening. He had no idea if it was something good or bad. Therefore, even though he had already chanted the activation incantation, he still didn't dare rashly use the Fate Siphon charm. He was afraid it would make things worse or that it would have the opposite effect.

Seconds passed as Klein felt the passage of time was especially slow. He felt as though an entire century had passed.

Finally, he heard Mr. Azik speak with a somewhat hoarse and uncertain tone:

"It's you…”

Following that, an unperturbed voice that was clearly female sounded:

"You have three choices.

"First, continue proceeding forward to seek completeness. Allow Salinger to revive within your body;

"The second is to have me help you extract that half soul, allowing you to take it with you. You will think of a way to stitch it back together, but this will make you transform back to your original form. You will stop repeatedly dying and reviving, but it will not be the present you. Your past incarnations will truly recede into being dreams;

"Third, it's to give up everything and directly leave. You will forever be stuck at your current level. You will have no way of advancing further. You will still die again and again, waking up with no memories, and repeatedly search for your past experiences."

Klein was taken aback by what he heard. He never expected that there was another "person" in the depths of the mausoleum. Furthermore, she appeared to have absolute authority. She provided the former Death Consul, Azik Eggers, different choices that he could choose from.

This is that the "Artificial Death" that's hiding deep in the black fog?

No, "He" originally didn't seem to have any intelligence. It's been so long, and it's not like "He" has tried communicating…

Extract the half soul and think of a way to stitch it together… What does that mean? Azik's soul was not whole to begin with?

Extract it from where? The lady speaking is actually able to do something Mr. Azik is incapable of?

Also, who is Salinger? Why would he be revived in Mr. Azik's body? He, or "He" is Death that caused the Pale Disaster, Mr. Azik's father or grandfather? "He" foresaw "His" death; hence, he left a seed in Mr. Azik's body for "Him" to revive?

The first choice is definitely something to eliminate without any thought. The second and third choice each have their own problems. The former makes him not his current self. He will become an unfamiliar "him." The latter is to suffer an undying curse for all eternity, never to receive salvation… If he's confident with himself, truly treating all the past incarnations as an anchor, then the second choice can be considered. It allows for reconciliation and a compromise… But this involves the splitting of a half soul into half. It's impossible to guess what developments will happen to the other half soul which didn't experience those incarnations in the future. The anchor might not be able to resolve the problem…

Ideas flashed through Klein's mind. He was puzzled, curious, stumped, and confused. He was so near, yet so far from a solution.

It was Azik's life. It was a future he needed to face. No one else could make the decision for him.

And whatever Klein needed to say had been said. He stood there helpless and worried, waiting for Mr. Azik to speak again.

Azik looked at the beautiful hooded lady in front of him without saying a word. The pale-white eyes in his eyes flickered.

The illusory but real towering feathered serpent seemed to sense a negative development. It suddenly lashed out its tail, wildly sweeping it around as it lunged its head downward and opened its gaping mouth, revealing dark red flesh and fangs that were tainted with yellow oil stains. It stuck out its black serpent tongue and spat dark green slime in a bid to devour Azik Eggers.

However, all of its attempts failed to be effective. It seemed to live in another world!

Amidst the unsettling silence, Azik raised his right hand and rubbed his temples. Calmly, he said with a laugh, "Perhaps I'm accustomed to my present life. I choose the third choice."

Just as he said that, the hooded lady clenched her fist, gripping the golden bird-shaped accessory tightly. Then, she retracted her arm, pulling out the ancient item from the gap in Azik's forehead.

Azik's expression distorted once again as though he was experiencing unimaginable pain.

Every drop of his blood, and in every piece of flesh, there were some parts of his soul seeping out, mixing together into a transparent soul.

This soul appeared complete, but it was filled with discordant and disharmonious feelings. It was because it was half gold in color, the same all the way from the brows, eyes, to the torso, and its four limbs. It had an ancient simplistic beauty.

As the golden bird-shaped accessory was extracted, Azik's translucent soul began to disintegrate inch by inch, as though it was being skinned alive.

His throat let out an unhuman gasping sound once again, causing Klein's head to spin and ache. It felt as though a needle had stabbed into his brain and was stirred wildly.

In seconds, Azik's Spirit Body completely split into two. Half of it transformed into a golden stream that infused into the bird-shaped accessory, while the other half returned to his body, fusing with his flesh and blood.

The two pale-white flames in Azik's eyes were extinguished as the white feathers and pitch-black scales on his body receded. His warped expression also eased as he no longer looked as savage.

His expression turned slightly pale and translucent as his forehead throbbed. Clearly, he was suffering a pain that stemmed from deep within his Soul Body.

"Thank you for your help." He bowed towards the beautiful hooded lady. He turned around and floated up the staircase, coming to Klein's side.

"You can open your eyes now," Azik said with an exhausted smile.

Klein hurriedly opened his eyes and sized up Azik. Realizing that there weren't any signs of madness or loss of control, he was completely relieved. He curiously cast his gaze deep into the mausoleum.

The black fog was still emanating, completely blanketing everything underneath.

"Who was that?" he couldn't help but ask.

Azik laughed and reached out to grip his shoulder.

"Even if I were to tell you, you wouldn't be able to hear it unless 'She' is willing to let you know."

As he spoke, Klein subconsciously grabbed his two marionette's shoulders.

The colors around them saturated and clearly stacked upon one another. The two men and two marionettes quickly passed through the spirit world corresponding to the Berserk Sea, returning to Klein's inn in Kolain City.

Azik released his grip and pinched his forehead. With a gentle smile, he said, "I'll need to sleep for an unknown length of time in order to recover. If you have any questions, you can seek out the spirit world's Seven Lights. You should already be aware of the corresponding ritual."

"Mr. Azik, are you alright?" Klein asked in concern.

At the same time, he rebuked himself.

How can he be fine having lost half his soul forever?

Azik laughed and said, "It's not a big deal. I'll just be maintaining my previous state, allowing me to foresee my death and arrange everything, severing ties with my original life. I'll then forget everything and reawaken in search of my past.

"Like before, at least you're there, someone who knows a lot about my past. If I were to forget once again, I should be able to recall a lot when I receive your letter."

He paused and nodded indiscernibly as he chuckled.

"Sleep isn't a bad thing either. At least I'll have dreams. In my dreams, I never left, accompanying her while taking in the sun while guiding that stubborn son of mine to use the broadsword. I'll also make a swing for that little kid that loves to wheedle…”

Having said that, Azik threw out the copper whistle and said with a gentle smile, "Remember to write to me.

"But before I awaken, I will not reply to you."

Just as Klein reached out to receive the ancient and intricate copper whistle, Azik vanished from the room; his whereabouts an unknown.

After blankly watching this scene for a while, Klein suddenly let out a sigh.

…

To go anywhere else from Kolain City by land, one needed to follow the spiraling path that led upwards. After passing through the different streets, one would arrive at the peak of the city. Then, one had to descend the mountain and enter a plain.

At this moment, the Red Gloves team that Soest led was standing on a square at the peak, looking down at the abnormal Berserk Sea.

Daly Simone, who had been pressing her forehead all this time, suddenly lowered her hand as she said, feeling somewhat puzzled, "Everything has been returned to normal. There's no more problems."

"Normal?" Leonard returned with a question in puzzlement.

From his point of view, it was very difficult for Daly to return to normal before the end of the Berserk Sea's abnormality.

"Perhaps it's intermittent?" Soest hesitatingly raised a theory.

Daly was just about to answer when everyone's spiritual perception was triggered. Once again, they looked towards the Berserk Sea.

In the swath of pure blackness, one bright star after another lit up.

…

Backlund. Beneath Saint Samuel Cathedral.

Archbishop Anthony Stevenson received an emergency telegram from the sea.

The telegram's content was rather simple, but it was sufficiently shocking.

"Gehrman Sparrow has appeared, boarding the Black Tulip with another person. He has made Ludwell into a marionette and left with the person Ludwell addressed as Death Consul."

Gehrman Sparrow… Death Consul… Saint Anthony silently repeated these two names.

He leaned back slightly and closed his eyes. Once again, the corresponding complete information of the Sealed Artifact, 0-17 appeared in his mind.

"Number: 17.

"Name: Angel of Concealment

"Danger Grade: 0. Extremely Dangerous. It's of the highest importance and of the highest confidentiality. It is not to be inquired, disseminated, described, or spied.

"Security Clearance: Pope, Team A researchers, and Archbishop of the Backlund diocese (Note: When the archbishop is transferred out of the Backlund diocese, the corresponding memories have to be wiped out using Sealed Artifact 1-29)

"Sealed Method: The seal is completed through the combination of 1-29 and 1-80.

"Description: This isn't an item.

…

"Warning: 'She' cannot be used!"

"Appendix 1: This Sealed Artifact first appeared in the Pale Era of the Fourth Epoch.

Exact year: Missing.

Exact date: Missing.

Exact location: Missing

"Appendix 2: Based on the information, 'She' has been awakened five times.

"Appendix 3: A limited premise is the reason behind its inability to be used. It has been confirmed that 'She' can be used as the Goddess's descent vessel."

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CHAPTER 918
GUESSES AND IDEAS

Kolain City. Inside the inn.

Klein sat on a reclining chair, reaching out to receive the black tea with lemon from Winner Enzo.

Beside him, Admiral Hell Ludwell stood straight, wearing a mask with a rapier by his waist. He appeared like the most loyal guard.

Only at this point in time did Klein, who had completely calmed down, have the mental capacity to analyze what had happened in Death's mausoleum. Amongst all of that, what he paid most attention to was the existence that had helped Mr. Azik get out of his predicament at the critical moment and provide him with three choices.

First, a female voice;

Second, this matter is definitely advantageous to her. Otherwise, no one would cross such a great distance to provide assistance. Of course, if she happened to pass by and had helped Mr. Azik out of goodwill, that's also completely understandable and acceptable. But the problem is that the mausoleum is a product formed from Death's godly powers when "He" perished, a product of the characteristic, corpses, and the natural environment. Without the corresponding key, even deities can't find it. With a door that cannot be opened, how is it possible for anyone to be passing by?

Also, Mr. Azik's actions had been very sudden. He didn't first seek out the members of the Numinous Episcopate that are carrying out the Artificial

Death Project for information. He directly followed the calling and arrived at the Berserk Sea and entered Death's treasure trove. If it's not someone who can locate me or him, or them being someone who has a strong prescient ability, there's almost no existence that can arrive in such a timely manner;

Finally, the Salinger that can revive via Mr. Azik's body is almost certainly the "I'm mad, but I'm stronger" Death from the Fourth Epoch. That female voice directly addressed "Him" by his name without showing any signs of respect.

This…

As Klein seriously analyzed the information, he suddenly had a theory, but he couldn't help but avoid the possibility.

Based on what he knew, the Evernight, Death, and Giant Beyonder pathways were a group of its own. They could be interchanged at High Sequences. And other than using the honorific name of Lady of Crimson or some special Grade 0 Sealed Artifact to occupy a portion of the Moon's authority, the Goddess also had the title Mistress of Repose and Silence. That totally pointed to the Underworld and Death's domain.

And back at the foggy town, and with his use of the holy sword to make a vow with the Goddess bearing witness, as well as the Goddess clearly possessing the authority of misfortune, it made Klein believed that he had entered "Her" special watchlist, just like how he singled out certain believers using the Sea God Scepter.

Making a bold assumption and seeking careful verification, then almost all the questions can be answered if she really was the Goddess.

As one of the seven orthodox deities, as one of the winners of the Pale Era, "She" has the level and right to address Death by "His" name…

And having been labeled by "Her," once anything abnormal happens, such as me entering a strange place like Death's treasure trove, "She" would definitely sense it and take the necessary action in response. Furthermore, as it definitely requires some time, "She" didn't manage to stop it at the beginning…

To "Her," that Artificial Death, or the Death pathway's Uniqueness that had initially come to life, clearly enhances "Her" authority in the aspects of repose and silence. It might even allow "Her" to directly intrude into Death's domain, just like what the Mother Tree of Desire did to the Chained God…

When Death perished, the three Sequence 1 characteristics should've automatically separated. It's unknown who received them. If the Goddess is searching for them, perhaps "Ruler of the Ancient Underworld, Lady of all the Undead" will be added to "Her" title…

Although Mr. Azik has been pursued by the Church's High-Sequence Beyonders, he has ultimately never suffered any real threats. From the looks of it, the Goddess has been waiting all this time for today's development… Upon coming to this realization, Klein suddenly felt a little frightened.

He was rather pious. At the very least, he superficially raised his right hand in a pious manner. Tapping four spots in a clockwise manner on his chest, he formed the sign of the crimson moon and muttered, "Praise the Lady."

This made him recall the answer he received when he asked Snake of Fate Will Auceptin about obtaining the High-Sequence Beyonder potion formulas of the Seer pathway.

"*…can only be obtained from the crazy Zaratul or the Hornacis mountain range. If you are the Blessed of the Evernight, treat it as though I didn't say it."*

After the incident at the foggy town, Klein had already discovered that heading to the Hornacis mountain range and finding Zaratul was the same

choice. Even stealing the Antigonus family's notebook from Saint Samuel Cathedral's basement was the same. And up to this date, he realized that the second line was not without meaning.

He stroked his chin and muttered, "Perhaps, maybe, possibly… I'm really considered a Blessed of the Evernight…"

Towards this, Klein wasn't too unreceptive to it.

On the one hand, he had spent the first few months after coming to this world with the Church of Evernight's Tingen Nighthawks team. He had a group of great teammates and colleagues. He had a rather heartwarming life and acceptable ideals. To this day, he still recalled the past; therefore, although he wasn't a worshiper of the Evernight Goddess, he was very accepting of this deity.

On the other hand, at least on what he had seen to date, the Evernight Goddess had yet to show any ill intent. Instead, "She" had given him some "blessings." Klein believed that since he had been specially marked, it was unlikely that he could be free from it anytime soon. All he could do was learn to accept it and make good use of it.

Of course, I can't let down my guard… In addition, I already have too many enemies in the form of the Mother Tree of Desire, True Creator, Primordial Demoness, Primordial Moon, Blasphemer Amon, Angel of Fate Ouroboros, and others. Some of "Them" might even be able to get a hold of my location at any time. Without finding someone powerful to cozy up to, my future will really be difficult! With so many things on his plate, Klein quickly adjusted his state of mind.

To him, as long as the Goddess had labeled him from the moment he made the vow using the holy sword, and not earlier, as well as not constantly "monitoring" him, he found it acceptable.

At least from the special labels afforded to me by the Sea God Scepter, constant "monitoring" isn't possible… Hmm, Mr. Azik will be sleeping for a

very long period of time. The Goddess can't just do a divine descent as "She" pleases. There must be some corresponding obstacles and difficulties. Otherwise, the seven orthodox deities would have made divine descents all across the world to resolve all kinds of problems. That's why I should keep a low profile and behave myself in the Southern Continent. I shouldn't try to pin my hopes on an external factor… Klein reminded himself before scrutinizing his new marionette, Admiral Hell Ludwell.

To be frank, he was rather curious about the face hidden beneath the silver mask. But upon recalling how there was an anomaly when Ludwell took off his mask in their previous battle, he held back his thoughts. He planned to make the attempt again after he left the city and did it in the woods or somewhere uninhabited.

After some work, Klein gained a rough understanding of his new marionette's Sequence and powers.

Ludwell was Sequence 5 Gatekeeper of the Death pathway, and he wasn't a normal human.

The corresponding Sequence 9 was Corpse Collector. Back in Tingen, Klein had already learned of its specifics. He knew that they possessed certain traits of a corpse. Their entire being appeared rather cold and grim, and their body temperatures were relatively low. This allowed them to avoid being attacked by dead unintelligent spirits. At the same time, they also had their physical bodies enhanced. They gained resistance to the cold, decay, and corrosiveness of cadaveric auras. They were naturally equipped with Spirit Vision, and they understood the characteristics and weaknesses of undead creatures.

Sequence 8 was Gravedigger. Corpse Collectors who advanced to this Sequence become stronger. Their Spirit Vision was further enhanced as their agility increased. They were able to communicate with nearby spirits, allowing them to provide the Beyonder with help. Other than that, Gravediggers could quickly find the weaknesses of unfamiliar undead

creatures and spirit world creatures via observation. This was known as the Eye of Death.

Sequence 7 Spirit Medium was a qualitative change. Beyonders of this Sequence gained knowledge of various kinds of mysticism rituals related to spirits. They could directly communicate with the natural spirits and loitering dead souls in the real world. Hence, they had informants everywhere.

At the same time, they could use different spirits to actualize different kinds of magic, creating various kinds of supernatural phenomena in a rather multifaceted way.

Sequence 6 Spirit Guide and Sequence 5 Gatekeeper didn't experience a qualitative change from Spirit Medium other than an increase in the range for communication. Spirit Guides began involving themselves with the spirit world as they began "hiring" messengers and receiving the help of certain spirit world creatures. Gatekeeper could sense the entrance to the Underworld, allowing them to control the dead spirits inside, doing so as though they watched over the gates that separated the dead from the living.

From Spirit Medium onwards, with the advancement of each Sequence, the quantity and quality of natural spirits, undead creatures, spirit world creatures that the Beyonders could control and order increased exponentially. Spirit Guide gained the use of the additional "Language of the Dead" that circumvented the protection provided by one's physical body. Focused on the ability to communicate with a Spirit Body, the ability was enhanced to giving an order, to the point of slavery. Gatekeepers could even open the mysterious gate that separated life and death to a certain extent, opening the gates to the Underworld!

If it wasn't for the natural restraints that Azik's copper whistle had on the Corpse Collector pathway's control over spirits, I probably wouldn't have even had what it takes to fight Admiral Hell back then. And even now, if not for Traveling to ensure my safety, I might not be able to finish Ludwell off, even if I used demigod-level powers. In the future, I have to take note when

taking revenge on Ince Zangwill. He was once a Gatekeeper after all. Klein nodded slightly, raised the cup, and drank a mouthful of black tea.

As for the weapon Ludwell had, it was named Harris Rapier. It originated from a prince from the Southern Continent in ancient times. It didn't directly correspond to any Sequence or pathway. It was more of a product that was similar to King of the North Ulyssan who gathered similar characteristics without any proper rules.

It only had one Beyonder power—bringing absolute destruction to the items it stabbed.

As a pirate admiral with the highest bounty, Ludwell didn't only have this mystical item. Unfortunately, his most precious Death ring had been taken by Azik. As for the silver mask on him, Klein temporarily had no way of taking it off for research.

Also, he really doesn't like money. He has zero need for money… Klein lowered his cup and retracted his gaze. Considering how it was still early, he planned on leaving Kolain City and heading elsewhere to wait for Danitz to finish his investigations.

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CHAPTER 919 "PERFECT" INFERENCE

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors, who was having an afternoon nap, jolted awake from her dreams. She saw an endless grayish-white fog and Mr. Moon who had his head bowed in prayer, clearly hearing his voice:

“…In the southeast outskirts of Backlund, in the middle of Delaire Forest, there is an abandoned ancient castle. In it are at least two ancient wraiths, and other dead spirits. The possibility of other Beyonders living there cannot be eliminated. The coordinates are…”

I finally have information on the main ingredient of Scribe. Information worth 300 pounds… Fors was instantly delighted as she immediately thanked Mr. Fool and sought "Him" to pass her message to The Moon that she would make payment shortly.

After completing this, she got out of bed and went to the first floor. She planned on pouring herself some wine to drink and consider when she would explore the abandoned castle, as well as the necessary preparations.

For the meantime, Leymano's Travels cannot be rented out… Xio needs to come along… That abandoned castle has several dead spirits and is rather dangerous. I have to consider the combination of spells. If there's anything lacking or not specialized, I'll hire Mr. World, Mr. Hanged Man, and The Sun to record the corresponding Beyonder powers… Although Fors lacked actual combat experience, she had been mixing with Beyonder circles for

years. Later, she had joined the Tarot Club, and having heard and seen much, she naturally knew the need for preparations before any adventures.

As for directly hiring Mr. World to do it, she had long struck it off her list of options. She believed that giving all the spoils and her savings to him wasn't enough to hire him.

Of course, if her attempts at exploration proved that the abandoned castle was extremely dangerous, something that a Beyonder at her Sequence couldn't enter, she would have no choice but to shoulder an enormous debt. After all, there was only hope and a future from being alive.

In theory, I shouldn't reach that stage. There are still two demigod-level Beyonder powers left on Leymano's Travels from Mr. World. At most, I'll use it first and think of means to make up for it in the future… The only problem is that the two demigod-level Beyonder powers might not be suitable against wraiths and dead spirits… Fors sipped some Black Rand as her various thoughts took form.

At this point, she heard a key latching into the keyhole as she instinctively looked towards the door.

The door suddenly opened as Xio walked in, carrying two paper bags that emitted a rich fragrance.

"Desi pies?" Fors asked immediately before frowning in puzzlement. "Haven't you had lots of commissions recently? Why are you back so early?"

Xio threw a bag of Desi pies over and said without hiding her smile, "I happened to walk past it. I also hadn't had lunch, so I planned on taking a break."

Without waiting for Fors to ask further, she said, "I've accumulated enough points! I can soon exchange them for the Interrogator potion formula!"

Although her monitoring of royal guard captain, Viscount Stratford, hadn't had any significant progress, it was the kind that accumulated points on a daily basis. All she needed to do was submit a passable report every week to receive the corresponding "bounty." Therefore, together with the other commissions and their varying levels of success, Xio had already earned enough to obtain the Interrogator potion formula.

"Finally…" Fors sincerely felt happy for her friend. Then, she shook the wine cup in her hand. "Shall we celebrate with a drink?"

At the same time, she also thought of something pertaining to herself.

This is great. After becoming a Sequence 7, Xio should've experienced a qualitative change. It will make exploring that ancient castle a sure thing!

Xio looked at the transparent liquid in the cup before shaking her head incessantly.

"Drinking is bad!"

With that said, she frowned.

"Besides, I abhor the smell."

Before Fors could speak, she suddenly recalled something. She stood up and walked to the door.

"I saw the mailbox filled with things. Haven't you opened it today?"

"I didn't have the time." Fors wore a look as though she was busy rushing out her drafts.

Xio was a person of action. Ignoring her explanation, she had already headed out to clear the mailbox.

About ten seconds later, she walked back in with a stack of newspapers and a few envelopes. As she looked at the addressee, she said, "It's all yours! Two letters from the publisher. One's an invitation letter from a surgery forum. One letter is from Pritz Harbor."

Pritz Harbor… Fors's mind stirred as she put down her cup, and caught the letter Xio threw at her.

She seemed to openly tear open all the letters in front of her friend, discovering that one of the letters was indeed from her teacher, Dorian Gray Abraham.

“…Calderón City is in a rather special spot deep in the spirit world. I'm not sure of its origins other than it's very dangerous. A demigod had once stepped in without ever coming out… When selling the actual spirit world coordinates to that gathering's member, there's a need for you to warn him…”

Mr. World's target is such a dangerous spirit world city? Fors stared at the letter in her hand as her eyes widened.

…

The Red Gloves team which had arrived at the next East Balam city had rendezvoused with the local Nighthawks, taking up an office of theirs.

"Everyone shall have half the day off. We will start tomorrow morning." Soest took out his pocket watch and opened it.

They were about to strike a secret gathering location of the Numinous Episcopate to find more information of the Artificial Death Project and dig out another batch of enemies that hid in Backlund.

As for the information obtained from Ulika, they had already sent it back to Backlund via telegram. They didn't need to worry about the subsequent

work. After all, they weren't the only Red Gloves team. Backlund's local Nighthawks were aplenty and powerful.

Leonard and Daly were just about to seek out their lodgings to rest when a Nighthawk with some East Balam blood walked in with a piece of paper.

"A new telegram from Backlund."

Soest reached out to take it, and after opening it for a few seconds, he said with a grave expression, "Gehrman Sparrow has appeared again. Using divination methods, it has been confirmed that it's him."

Gehrman Sparrow… Leonard wasn't surprised by this outcome. He already knew from Dwayne Dantès that his former colleague, Klein Moretti, was still alive.

He curiously asked, "What did Gehrman Sparrow do again?"

Soest surveyed the area and sternly said, "He boarded the Black Tulip and turned Admiral Hell Ludwell into his marionette."

"Admiral Hell?"

"Ludwell?"

"Marionette?"

The Red Gloves could hardly hide their astonishment as they exclaimed one after another. Even Leonard Mitchell was extremely surprised.

One had to know that Admiral Hell Ludwell, who wore the ring left by Death, had the highest bounty among the Seven Pirate Admirals. He was publicly recognized to be the strongest beneath the Four Kings. He was definitely not someone an ordinary Sequence 5 could compare to. As for Gehrman Sparrow, he had actually boarded his ship, turning Admiral Hell

into his marionette despite being surrounded by his, the latter's, undead army and subordinates!

Although they didn't know much about a Faceless and a Marionettist, just the term marionette was enough to let them know that Admiral Hell Ludwell's outcome was worse than death.

He's already this strong? He infiltrated Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate to meet the requirements for a demigod ritual? Leonard gradually fell silent as he didn't ask more.

At this moment, Soest offered more information:

"According to the crew that escaped from the Black Tulip, there wasn't a fight back then. Gehrman Sparrow and another man boarded the ship. The moment Admiral Hell Ludwell saw them, he gave up any resistance and prostrated himself onto the deck, calling the man 'Death Consul.' Later, he allowed Gehrman Sparrow to turn him into his marionette."

"Death Consul…" Leonard subconsciously turned to look at Daly Simone.

He believed that this Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Corpse Collector pathway likely knew what Death Consul meant.

Daly scoffed and shook her head.

"I only know that the former Balam Empire, a blood descendant of Death that ruled the real world was known as Death Consul."

"However, the Numinous Episcopate's royal faction's leader has never called himself Death Consul," another Red Glove, Cindy, mentioned in puzzlement.

This was rather open knowledge amongst the Nighthawks. Those that reached Sequence 7 and above, or those who joined the Red Gloves, had the right to be privy to this information.

As for the Artificial Death faction, it was even more unlikely for any of them to call themselves Death Consul.

"Who knows? Perhaps the Numinous Episcopate has fractured again. Now, there's an additional Death Consul faction." Daly first made a casual comment before she thought and said, "Gehrman Sparrow has a mysterious origin. His motives for infiltrating Chanis Gate is unknown. Perhaps, it's really related to the Numinous Episcopate."

The Numinous Episcopate had always been a main target that the Church of Evernight had been trying to take down. The conflict between the two ran deep.

Her statement reminded Leonard Mitchell of something because he knew that Gehrman Sparrow was Klein Moretti. Furthermore, he had joined a secret organization that worshiped The Fool and represented itself with tarot cards and had a working relationship with the Numinous Episcopate.

In the few factions of the Numinous Episcopate, there's no Death Consul… Admiral Hell Ludwell can almost be confirmed to be an "arm" of the Numinous Episcopate. Dealing with him is equivalent to dealing with the Numinous Episcopate…

Dwayne Dantès once said that the members of that secret organization come from different places with different goals… Klein's goal is revenge. Could the goal of one of the members be to strike the Numinous Episcopate, to gradually absorb them to revive or recreate Death in their own image?

Since there's an undying monster like Dwayne Dantès who lived since the Fourth Epoch, it's normal for that secret organization to have an additional ancient Death Consul. Perhaps, his corresponding tarot card is Death! As his mind raced, Leonard began believing that he had obtained the truth.

Then, he made a connection with certain details.

Dwayne Dantès is an undying creature who had lived since the Fourth Epoch.

He knows the Southern Continent very well.

He recently left Backlund and has gone missing!

Leonard was alarmed. Taking the opportunity while his teammates were in discussion, he lifted his teacup and covered his mouth, softly muttering to himself, "Old Man, could Dwayne Dantès be the Death Consul?"

Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice said with a smiling tone, *"No.*

"Balam Empire's Death Consul is both a rank and a title. It's also the name of the Death pathway's Sequence 2."

Sequence 2… That secret organization even has a Sequence 2 angel… Leonard's pupils constricted as he muttered once again, "How are you so certain that Dwayne Dantès isn't the Death Consul? Because he's not an angel?"

Pallez immediately chuckled.

"No. The reason is very simple. You've seen the real Death Consul's portrait before. Back when you Nighthawks were investigating Welch's suicide. You might have even met him personally.

"He's a teacher at Khoy University's Department of History, Azik Eggers."

Azik Eggers… Leonard was taken aback before he came to a realization.

He finally understood how Klein Moretti was able to resurrect from the dead, why he was fine suffering curses, or why he could join the secret organization symbolized by tarot cards, doing all of that while usually not showing anything special about himself!

The reason was that behind Klein was a member of the secret organization with the corresponding tarot card: Death!

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CHAPTER 920
CALDERÓN'S ORIGINS

Bayam, the slums.

Hooded with a mask underneath it, The Hanged Man Alger once again met with Admiral of Stars Cattleya.

At a table, the two of them sat across each other, facing each other without saying a word.

Finally, Cattleya said, "Have you heard the news?"

Alger didn't directly answer as he returned with a question:

"The one about Gehrman Sparrow?"

Cattleya fell silent for a few seconds and nodded.

"He has turned Admiral Hell into his marionette."

Be it Admiral of Blood from before or the present Admiral Hell, they were both pirates who had a higher bounty than her. No matter how confident she was of herself, she didn't believe that the two Sequence 5 elites were weaker than her!

"You learned of it earlier than I expected." Alger confirmed the authenticity of the news in a tactful manner.

Being a member of the Church of Storms which controlled a large region of the sea, he could directly obtain the latest news from the official channels.

Cattleya curled her lips and said, "If the Future were at sea, I might have to take days or even weeks to receive it. But I've been in Bayam recently."

She didn't divulge her intel source.

After a pause, Admiral of Stars asked frankly, "What else do you know about this matter?"

Alger shook his head.

"I was trying to figure out the exact situation when I saw your signal, so I rushed here to meet you."

Cattleya nodded slightly.

"Gehrman Sparrow and Admiral Hell didn't engage in a battle. Ludwell didn't resist, because Gehrman Sparrow had boarded the Black Tulip with a man who was addressed as Death Consul."

Death Consul… Alger's pupils dilated as he felt an indescribable pressure.

Such a term wasn't something any random demigod could undertake!

Furthermore, that wasn't something the man flaunted himself, but an honorific term that Admiral Hell Ludwell had used. Furthermore, he gave up resistance and was willing to lose his life!

With The Hanged Man not saying a word, Cattleya added, "In the Death pathway, Death Consul is the name of the Sequence 2. Of course, every emperor of the Balam Empire was also given this title."

Indeed, an angel, an angel from the Death domain… Alger automatically ignored the latter possibility. After all, based on the "acting method," the position of emperor was definitely held by a Sequence 2 angel before the Balam Empire fell. And for someone who could make Admiral Hell become

Gehrman Sparrow's marionette without putting up any resistance, they were definitely not something a mere title could accomplish.

At this moment, Alger suddenly thought of something, something that left a deep impression on him.

After Vice Admiral Hurricane Qilangos successfully fled, he was found standing by the side of an artificial lake. His face had rapidly rotted with pieces of flesh falling off. Even his eyeballs had rolled out of their sockets.

It was undoubtedly the damage dealt by a potent force from the Death domain. And Alger later confirmed that it was done by Mr. Fool's Blessed.

To rapidly cause the death of a pirate admiral without him putting up any resistance, especially one who carried such a powerful Sealed Artifact, the assailant's level was obvious!

The Church of Storms's Spellsinger of God Archbishop Snake had determined at the scene that it was done by a High-Sequence Beyonder from the Death pathway and that it was not the person he knew.

Alger had no doubts about that. He believed that it was done by a Sequence 4 or Sequence 3 demigod, in other words, a saint. He also felt horrified that Mr. Fool's Blessed was a High-Sequence Beyonder.

Now, he secretly gulped his saliva with great difficulty, believing that he had underestimated Mr. Fool back then as well as that Blessed.

That person wasn't a saint but a Grounded Angel, one that shared the same level as the three crowns of the various orthodox Churches!

When it came to religion, the three crowns represented the various Churches' pope, pontiff, or chief shepherd.

*A Death Consul as a Blessed… Although Mr. Fool is still recovering, the amount of strength at his disposal is quite sizable… *Alger's thoughts

churned as his eyes shimmered. He was momentarily at a loss for words.

Cattleya sensed his gloom as she asked, "You seem to have recalled something."

Alger deliberated for two seconds before vaguely replying, "Based on what I know, Mr. Fool has a Death angel amongst his Blessed."

That matches… Cattleya said as though she was muttering to herself, "Then why did The World promise me Mythical Creature blood that's not from that Death angel? Is it due to having closer ties with the other one, making it easier to obtain?"

"Perhaps." Although Alger felt that Admiral of Stars's inference wasn't wrong, he habitually gave a noncommittal answer.

Cattleya didn't continue on the topic as she said, "We will start the operation tonight from half-past seven to eight.

"If you can participate in it, head over there with me."

She has finally figured out the situation with the Artisan? Alger secretly heaved a sigh of relief and asked in puzzlement, "Why that time?"

This wasn't the most suitable period for any covert operation. Once any mistake was made, the official Beyonders would quickly detect it and rush over.

Cattleya nudged the heavy glasses on her nose and said with a complicated smile, "It's because it's dinnertime for them.

"And they will be having mushrooms for dinner."

*What's the connection… *The experienced Alger realized that he couldn't read the subcontext of Admiral of Stars's words.

…

East Balam, in the lush and humid forest.

Klein deliberately avoided the main path and came to an uninhabited area. He planned on getting Ludwell to take off his silver mask.

This wasn't only to satisfy his curiosity but for a genuine reason. The silver mask was too striking. If he didn't deal with it, there was no amount of disguising that could direct the attention of others away from it.

*The biggest problem for a Marionettist is the marionette's identity… The more powerful the marionette, the more famous they were while alive. Bringing one along with me has the risk of being exposed… If it wasn't because I didn't have the time to finish off the pirates on the Black Tulip, I would have had the means to keep it under wraps. For example, I could continue letting Ludwell be the captain while I pretend to be his subordinate. To a Faceless, that's very simple… *Klein sighed as he passed through the forest.

There were many mosquitoes around him, but none of them came for him. All of them were circling Admiral Hell Ludwell, trying to suck his blood in vain.

Klein had given his new marionette the Green Essence ring which attracted mosquitoes. This was because its effects were completely overshadowed by Flower of Blood. Wearing the two rings was rather meaningless for Winner Enzo. In addition, Klein had confirmed that Ludwell's situation was special. He wasn't too afraid of being bitten by mosquitoes.

After walking a distance, Klein casually tossed a coin and stopped.

After a few minutes of contemplation, he decided to finish something else before removing the new marionette's mask. This was because, through this process, he could confirm the severity of the latent danger beneath the mask.

Taking out the corresponding items, Klein quickly set up a ritual and moved the radio transceiver from above the gray fog to the real world.

He wanted to contact Arrodes!

Before he left Kolain City, he had paid Miss Magician 350 pounds for the spirit world coordinates to Calderón City. He had also been warned about the extreme dangers associated with it. Therefore, he planned on obtaining more information from two channels in order to prepare for his hunting mission.

The two channels involved asking the magic mirror and Red Light. With Mr. Azik being in prolonged slumber, Klein decided not to hesitate further. He planned on expanding his social circle, and not just stubbornly and inflexibly stick to the Evernight Goddess. He needed to find powers to balance things out. And the relatively friendly Seven Lights of the spirit world were the best choice!

With the appearance of the radio transceiver, the surrounding woods suddenly turned gloomy. It was as though the spirit world had overlapped with the real world.

In about ten seconds, tapping sounds sounded. Illusory white paper began being spat out:

"Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning.

"There's temporarily no danger here. What say you?"

Seeing this coquettish manner of speech, Klein sighed silently and finally confirmed that he had connected to the magic mirror, Arrodes.

He had previously been afraid that the white piece of paper would have the words: "I want to have a child with you."

Of course, he had divined the level of danger of contacting Arrodes above the gray fog, and he obtained an answer that it was fine. However, with the Mother Tree of Desire having a precedent of interfering with divination, as well as his misinterpretation of infiltrating Saint Samuel Cathedral's Chanis Gate, he wasn't too certain.

"Indeed." Klein nodded in a reserved manner before asking. "What do you know of Calderón City in the spirit world?"

Amidst clicking sounds, a piece of illusory white paper exited the radio transceiver in a hesitant manner:

"I can't see that city too clearly. I do not know its exact state, but I can confirm that a saint had perished in there before. There were also certain angels, Travelers, and spirit world creatures who had once entered to explore it and left it alive in a relatively smooth manner. However, none of them got much out of it.

"Also, I know the origins of that city."

Without waiting for Klein to press, more illusory white paper spat out amidst clicking sounds:

"Its former name was the City of the Dead. It was a grounded divine kingdom of the ancient goddess, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace.

"Ever since that ancient goddess opened up the Underworld, 'Her' divine kingdom was moved there. The City of the Dead gradually became the holy grounds of 'Her' descendants and believers.

"Before Gregrace was heavily injured by the ancient sun god and had the city uprooted and thrown deep into the spirit world, none of its citizens ever came out again. The name 'Calderón' originates from the Abraham family's angel, the first person who stepped in. In the Language of the Dead, it means 'Unknown Soul.'"

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CHAPTER 921
POLITENESS FIRST

When it came to the understanding of ancient gods, Klein knew as much as many High-Sequence Beyonders. After all, he had the City of Silver who had continued on from the Second Epoch to this day behind him. The corresponding myths that were passed down the ages had left plenty of influence.

Based on what he knew, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace was a so-called ancient goddess. Because of the City of Silver's Creator, the ancient sun god who eventually ended up being consumed by the Kings of Angels dealt heavy damage to "Her." Eventually, "She" perished towards the end of the Second Epoch.

However, "Her" influence had yet to dissipate to this day. Signs of "Her" existence remained because "She" was the founder of the Underworld!

City of the Dead… Unknown Soul… Ancient goddess… It sounds very dangerous… Klein looked at the radio transceiver in front of him and fell silent.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Another piece of illusory white paper spat out:

"Apart from that, I'm unsure of the rest.

"Great Master, I have a suggestion. Would you like to hear it?"

That's a nice question… Klein reined in his thoughts and nodded gently.

"Speak."

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker as a new line of text quickly appeared on the illusory white paper:

"Regarding Calderón City, you can ask Red Light Aiur Moria."

I still have to ask Red Light in the end… Klein nodded slightly and switched to asking, "Is there any danger if I were to remove Admiral Hell Ludwell's mask?"

"No!" A decisive answer appeared before Klein's eyes.

That's good… he thought and said, "Let's end it here for today."

"Great Master, wise Master, in another one or two minutes, a gaze will be cast here! Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, will await your next summoning. Goodbye~" The radio transceiver began tapping without any hesitation.

Another one or two minutes? Why didn't you say so earlier? Klein was alarmed as though he was seeing a countdown timer on a bomb. He hurriedly used the altar and material he had yet cleared to set up a sacrificial ritual. He then threw the radio transceiver above the gray fog.

After doing all of this and confirming that there weren't any anomalies around him, Klein made Ludwell walk to the side and not face him directly as he took off the silver mask.

Gloomy pale-white light spewed out, but it wasn't as exaggerated in his battle between Klein and Ludwell. It only enveloped a small region like an extinguishing candle.

Meanwhile, as the radio transceiver had been sent above the gray fog, the gloomy, cold feeling that had disappeared in the nearby forest appeared again. Furthermore, it had an indescribable sense of horror that struck at the heart.

This reminded Klein of a cemetery and the legendary Underworld.

After waiting a few seconds, seeing that there weren't any additional abnormal developments, he made his other marionette, Winner Enzo, to circle to Ludwell's front and carefully observe the face that had been masked for extended periods of time.

The face lacked flesh; its skin clung tightly to his bones without any colors. It was as translucent as crystal.

Beneath the "crystal," transparent and indescribable shadows quickly flowed out, at times fusing with the skull, and at other times they shrank in gaps, surfacing on his teeth.

Compared to the first one or two months of his transmigration, Klein would've been shocked by Admiral Hell's appearance, but now, having already seen all kinds of odd Rampagers and mutated bodies, he wasn't shocked by such looks.

After another round of research, Klein completely figured out Ludwell's condition.

All of this stemmed from the unique traits of him being a Gatekeeper.

At Sequence 5, after becoming Gatekeeper, Beyonders could use their bodies as cages that belonged exclusively to the Underworld, allowing them to contain a certain number of souls, deceased, and natural spirits. As such, they obtained all kinds of unique powers with powerful helpers. There was no need to bring a huge undead army around in an eye-catching manner.

This was the origin of many folk tales.

Another purpose of a Gatekeeper was an ancient role: to guard the Underworld in their bodies, preventing the souls contained within from escaping, and to use them. This similarly had the symbolism of a pair of double illusory doors.

And after ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace, created the Underworld, it was bestowing a small amount of the Death pathway's authority to all Gatekeepers. This made Beyonders of this Sequence receive an enhancement in strength.

The reason why Ludwell kept wearing the mask was because he had contained a powerful Underworld creature in him. On the one hand, this creature could be used by him, and on the other hand, it was eroding his body, turning him into a half-human, half-dead existence. At the same time, ultimately, this creature was innately connected to the Underworld. It was attempting to open the door and return.

This was a combination of a Gatekeeper's own powers and authority, and with the augmentation from Death's ring, it allowed Admiral Hell Ludwell to enlarge the Door to the Underworld, allowing him to steer the Black Tulip directly inside.

Half-human and half-dead form… No wonder Ludwell dares to enter the Underworld. A real living person probably can't survive a second inside… Yes, that Underworld creature gives his body some traits of a dead soul, allowing him to extract the Spirit Bodies of others remotely. I had suffered from that back then… Klein thought in enlightenment as he made Ludwell wear the silver mask again.

The mask's purpose was to placate the soul. It allowed the Underworld creature in Ludwell's body to be in a relatively calm state most of the time.

After resolving his puzzlement, Klein cast his gaze back onto the altar.

He wanted to attempt to contact one of the spirit world's Seven Lights.

In this aspect, there were special secret deed rituals and the corresponding spirit channeling ritual he could choose from. After some consideration, Klein chose the latter. This was because a secret deed ritual required him to open up his mind and spirit, allowing the targeted existence to make contact and thus obtain certain knowledge, strength, help, and a spiritual

experience. This also meant that his body's thoughts and secrets were open to that existence.

And through the spirit channeling ritual, there were two types—direct communication and praying for a soulfall. As the spirit world's Seven Lights were extremely lofty existences, Klein couldn't guarantee a response based on the ritual's request. Therefore, although he wished to communicate remotely via spirit channeling, he had to make preparations for a soulfall to show his sincerity.

Lighting three candles and dripping liquids like mint essential oil, Klein specially took out a paper figurine and placed it on the altar for the vessel for the soulfall. If there wasn't anything similar, the supplicating target would soulfall onto him, just like how Danitz had requested Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina's soulfall back then. There were also two scenarios. First, the possessed body would lose all their senses, and they would have the corresponding existence control a certain part of their body so as to facilitate providing a question and answer. The simplest example was one using the mouth to speak while the other controlled a hand to write.

Klein quickly completed the first part of the ritual before he took a step back, opened his mouth, and chanted in ancient Hermes, "I!

"I summon in my name:

"I pray to communicate with the inextinguishable light of the spirit world, the embodiment of infinite knowledge, the Red who wields authority and will…”

The biggest difference between this spirit channeling ritual and ordinary ones was that it couldn't be directed to deities, be it the Evernight Goddess or the God of Knowledge and Wisdom, "Their" honorific names couldn't appear in the ritual or else it was bound to fail.

From a mysticism angle, this meant that the spirit world's Seven Lights didn't serve any deity.

As the words that facilitated the communication with natural spirits were said, Klein saw the three flames burgeon as light splattering sounds connected together as though a door of light was opening.

The area around the altar suddenly turned silent and dark as pairs of unknown eyes looked over from different areas.

A cold, gloomy air blew past. Apart from the three candles, all the items on the altar floated in midair. Among them, the paper figurine staggered straight as its surface was tainted with a thick, clean red that didn't look bloody at all.

"Greetings." As Klein recalled the description of the spirit world's Seven Lights from some mysticism books, he spoke by following the correct way of interacting that he had concluded.

He acted like he was facing a teacher.

The bright red paper figurine's head moved slightly as it let out an illusory but stern voice:

"Hello there."

*Quite polite… Indeed, spirit channeling became a soulfall. Thankfully, I made preparations… *Various thoughts flashed in Klein's mind as he earnestly and politely asked, "Your Excellency Aiur Moria, I have a question I would like to ask you."

"You can just call me Aiur Moria. Please go ahead and ask." The paper figurine floating in midair seemed to be competing with Klein about who was more polite.

"I wish to get information on Calderón City." Klein didn't change his attitude. After all, in the Foodaholic Empire, there was a proverb: Nobody will find fault with extra courtesy.

The bright red, nearly transparent paper figurine pondered for two seconds and said, "Can I know your purpose?"

Klein didn't conceal his purpose. He frankly said, "To hunt a Spirit World Plunderer."

The paper figurine's head moved slightly.

"That's indeed something that can only be found in Calderón City with ease. Elsewhere, Spirit World Plunderers are like a drop of water in the ocean. They are very hard to distinguish, and even I will occasionally discover them. I'm unable to lock onto them for long periods of time.

"A number of them are active in the core region of Calderón City. A few are scattered in the periphery. As long as you don't attempt to go too deep inside, it's actually not too dangerous. Unfortunately, due to special reasons, us Seven Lights are prohibited from entering; otherwise, we could still provide you with some actual help."

"That's formerly the divine kingdom of the ancient goddess, Gregrace?" Klein's heart settled down as he asked as a form of confirming the answers.

The bright red paper figurine said, "Yes, the ancient Death wished to revive 'Herself' using this City of the Dead, but 'She' failed completely. The authority was taken by Balam's Death.

"However, this also makes Calderón City more dangerous because the setup left by the ancient goddess underwent an anomaly after the failure. As for what it has turned into, I'm not too sure."

Is that so… Klein nodded indiscernibly. He raised a few questions about other matters and received a rather satisfactory answer.

…

Bayam. Outside a house near the harbor.

Alger and Cattleya were patiently waiting for the people inside to finish their dinner.

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CHAPTER 922
MUSHROOMS AND FISH

Looking at the lights that emitted out of the oriel window, the hooded and masked Alger was just about to ask about the details of the operation when he suddenly saw a shadow grow out of the rich darkness. It materialized as a lanky, pale, sickly young man.

Bloodless Heath Doyle… Alger quickly recognized the man to be the second mate of the Future.

Heath didn't look at him as he directly said to Cattleya, "Captain, they didn't notice anything and turned those mushrooms into cream of mushroom soup. They plan to use the prepared pan-fried fish as tonight's main course."

"Excellent." Cattleya removed the heavy glasses on her nose and used her eyes which had a mysterious purple hue to look through the neighboring house's dining hall across the walls.

Heath Doyle didn't speak further as his body instantly darkened and returned to the shadows. It was unknown where he had slunk to.

After hearing their conversation, and combining it with what Ma'am Hermit had previously mentioned, Alger had a rough idea of the core element to tonight's operation:

Mushrooms!

Poisonous mushrooms!

Although he didn't know what method Admiral of Stars was using to cause the spiritual intuition of the Beyonders inside to be ineffective and not be able to distinguish normal mushrooms from poisonous mushrooms, Alger believed that there was nothing impossible in mysticism.

He hesitantly said, "Will this cause Artisan Cielf's death?"

Unaffiliated Artisans were rather rare, so Alger didn't wish to lose such a "friend" if there was still room for turning things around. To him, the best case was to imprison the fellow and make him the exclusive Artisan for both him and The Hermit.

"No." Cattleya calmly shook her head as she explained, "Be it from the information you gave and the observations of my crew, there's one point to take note of: Cielf doesn't like fish, and he even hates it. This might have to do with him getting a fish bone stuck in his throat when he was young."

And it was because of this matter that Cattleya ultimately chose the mushroom strategy. This could effectively reduce the enemy's effective strength while allowing their side to minimize any risks.

The dark environment-bred mushrooms that devoured flesh and blood and were the first to be eliminated by Admiral of Stars because they could let Beyonders with sharp spiritual perception sense something amiss. This was akin to facing something poisonous. In addition, Beyonders who believed in the Primordial Moon had a rather deep understanding of herbs, plants, and fruits. Relying on visual observation, they were likely able to identify mushrooms that posed danger.

To trick them, the only way was for the food to be harmless itself. Only through its contact with something else did a mutation occur.

Based on this, the mushrooms previously created by Frank were perfect!

If the two conditions of fish and water weren't met, the mushrooms were ordinary mushrooms. They could neither poison a person to death or cause

diarrhea. It would be digested bit by bit and be broken down into its different components before being expelled by the body. At this point, any more fish and water was useless.

For this, Cattleya specially got Frank to temporarily abandon his experiment and had obtained a batch of mushrooms. She also promised to hunt an Aurora Order Rose Bishop for him.

"Hates fish…" Alger whispered, feeling like he couldn't keep up with The Hermit's thought process.

He had clearly asked if the poisonous mushrooms could cause Artisan Cielf's death, but the answer he received was that the Artisan wouldn't die because he didn't like fish and even hated it.

Is there some connection between the two? Alger questioned inwardly in puzzlement, but he didn't say it out loud.

He maintained his silence and planned to observe more and take note.

After a while, there were screams from inside the house, followed by pangs of painful grunts and vomiting.

"Begin," Cattleya issued an order in an abnormally succinct manner.

Her figure instantly turned transparent, turning into a sculpture formed by countless stars.

The sculpture shattered instantly as bright stars surged towards the house's door and drilled through a gap.

As stars gathered inside, Cattleya's figure materialized.

Then, she heard howling winds and sounds of collisions.

The door frame shook before the door opened. Wearing a hood and mask, Alger entered the targeted building not much slower than Admiral of Stars.

He swept his gaze and quickly took in the situation at the dining hall.

Artisan Cielf was retreating from the table with a look of horror.

On the ground were two men and a woman who were constantly vomiting mushrooms. At their chests, their clothes had ripped apart as one mushroom after another sprouted.

Upon sensing someone enter, they subconsciously looked up, revealing bunches of white spores on their faces.

Under his mask, Alger's face involuntarily twitched.

Although he was experienced and knowledgeable, and with him being a Beyonder who had his fair share of experience seeing horrifying scenes, such a scene still left a striking visual and mental impact on him.

Cattleya had expected it, but she had never expected such a harrowing sight. After a moment of surprise, she held her right hand to her mouth and blew a whistle.

Illusory ropes emerged from the ground and coiled around the three Primordial Moon believers like snakes.

"Is there a way to stop this?" Cattleya said to the shadow in the corner.

After a moment of silence, Heath Doyle's voice sounded.

"Frank said that he hadn't obtained a way to stop it in his experiments. The only way is cremation."

Cremation… Cattleya's brows quivered. Immediately, she took out some powder from a pocket and threw them out.

The powder seemed to have a life of their own as they accurately landed on the three primitive believers and the various mushrooms.

Silently, they burst into scarlet flames and silently burned whatever they touched.

Artisan Cielf was already dumbstruck from witnessing the mutation. When someone intruded, he had thought of resisting using his mystical item, but he quickly recognized the intruder to be Admiral of Stars Cattleya. Hence, he wisely gave up and stood in his spot, waiting.

He knew that he was of significant value. No matter where he went, he was not someone who would immediately be killed. Furthermore, Admiral of Stars never had any infamy to her name.

Worst comes to worst, I'll just have to join the Star Pirates… Besides, this pirate admiral seems to be more beautiful than the bounty notices. She exudes a completely different air… Cielf tugged at his wolf fang necklace and forced a smile, awaiting the intruder to mention her purpose.

Cattleya glanced at him and seriously observed his appearance. All she could confirm was that he was a classic example of someone from Intis, but she failed to find any similarities to Queen Mystic.

The pirate admiral deliberated and said, "I had been introduced by a friend, hoping to get you to create a mystical item, but I later discovered that you were with some Primordial Moon believers.

"The three of them aren't too strong and couldn't restrain you at all. Why do you still remain here?"

In this operation, Cattleya's main hypothetical enemy was actually the Artisan himself. This was because she could neither kill him or control him. Furthermore, he still had many well-matched mystical items, making him a powerful enemy. Yet, things developed smoothly to her surprise.

Cielf said with a smile, "They had strong ones in Bayam in the beginning. Using particular floral fragrances and powders, they infected me with a strange ailment, making me increasingly weaker."

Cattleya casually sized him up and said, "You have already recovered, so why aren't you taking this opportunity to escape?"

Alger stood by the side silently. He didn't say a word, afraid that his voice might betray him.

Artisan Cielf chuckled and said, "While I was under their control, they told me that as long as I believed in the Primordial Moon, I could use certain rituals to treat my chronic illness. I couldn't resist the temptation and tried it, and it really succeeded. I found the feeling of being a man again…"

Having said that, he came to an abrupt halt, realizing that he had said too much, exposing his secret illness.

This is him letting himself go too far when it comes to women; thus, slowly losing his abilities in bed? Alger chuckled inwardly.

Cielf looked up and glanced at them. Seeing that no one was mocking him, he coughed slightly and continued, "It wasn't something that relied on medicine. I really recovered my young, virile state. Later, I had two dreams of a moon that was bloody and very enticing.

"I believed that I had already become a believer of the Primordial Moon; therefore, I didn't dare to escape."

Cattleya and Alger silently exchanged gazes, simultaneously passing the death sentence on him.

As long as someone truly believed in an evil god, devil, or some other secret existence; unless they were willing to continue in the faith and slowly become crazier, there was no regret. Even if they were protected by official

Beyonder factions and didn't suffer any problems for prolonged periods, they might end up strangling themselves in their sleep years later!

This was nearly unsalvageable, unless they earned the right to receive the blessings of a Grounded Angel like a pope of a major Church, or if they accepted being isolated by certain Sealed Artifacts and live underground forever.

Of course, under such situations, there were also many who did nothing and managed to live to a ripe old age before dying a natural death. However, they were mostly ordinary people, targets that the evil gods, devils, and hidden existences easily ignored. As for Cielf, he was a very useful Artisan.

Cattleya didn't mention the Primordial Moon believers again. To her, it wasn't a big problem whether the Artisan believed in an evil god. As long as he could be communicated with to reach a deal for cooperation and not go crazy from time to time, the other matters weren't something a pirate needed to be worried about.

She switched topics and said, "What mystical items do you have now? I'll choose a few and leave you with the rest."

Towards such a development, Artisan Cielf wasn't too surprised. She was a pirate, not a policewoman. Doing a heist in passing was extremely normal. For her to leave him some items was something he should earnestly thank her for.

In fact, with his level and items, it was possible for him to successfully escape if he went all-out, but he lacked the courage.

"Alright." Cielf took out a pair of grayish-white glasses from his breast pocket. "Gargoyle Glasses. As long as sightlines are met, it can cause the other party to turn numb all over as though they are being petrified. There are two negative effects. First, if one wears it and looks into a mirror, one will turn numb as well. Second, one's body will turn heavy, making one unagile."

Isn't that the item I reserved… So it has already been made… Looking at the Artisan, Alger couldn't help but narrow his eyes.

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CHAPTER 923
AFTER EFFECTS

Cielf didn't notice the change in Alger's eyes. He pointed at one of the "cremated" Primordial Moon believers and said, "That cane was taken from me. It's called 'Word of the Sea.' It can release lightning at a target. Waving it and striking it will cause it to be augmented with wind blades. Apart from that, it can also create large water spheres and corrosive rainwater. It can also allow the wielder to not be afraid of deep-sea pressure. They can freely extract oxygen from the water. At the same time, it can also be used as a wand to provide flight.

"There are three negative side effects. First, it enjoys singing. Every six hours, it has to belt out a song. The resulting effects don't discriminate between friend or foe. Due to the different choices of songs and styles, it can make one's mind go adrift or have one's mind and soul shocked, and at other times, cause one to be irascible and be in a state of lowered reason. Of course, even without waiting six hours, it will also be very willing to sing if you so desire.

"Second, you can probably tell that it's equipped with living characteristics. Furthermore, it's one that is rather testy. It enjoys tripping, beating, or pulling the wielder down stairs when they aren't paying attention.

"Third, it will cause the wielder to easily be struck by lightning. Therefore, on stormy days, either don't go out or don't bring it along."

This is the Sealed Artifact that was made from Gehrman Sparrow's Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristic. If he were to know that you had already made it and had allowed the Primordial Moon believer to take it away, you will definitely be sold to someone who is need of you—in the form of a

Beyonder characteristic… Alger looked towards the dining table and saw the black silver-inlaid cane.

From what he knew, regardless of whether the other negative effects were severe, mystical items with living characteristics were considered Sealed Artifacts. This was because there were unpredictable dangers associated with them.

With Cattleya and her companion not telling him that he was done, Cielf could only continue taking out mystical items with a glum face.

"This short knife is called 'Blade of Poison.' The effects are obvious. There's no need for me to give any additional information, right?

"Eh, every time it deals damage, it will add on a random poison. As for what it is, it's all luck.

"Its negative effects aren't too serious. It will only cause medical treatment to fail and the feeling of being drunk to accumulate within the wielder."

Cielf continued introducing a few mystical items and finally heard Cattleya say, "Excellent, the rest are yours."

Phew… She still left me with three… Not only did Cielf not bear a grudge, he felt deep down how nice a person Admiral of Stars was. It was as though he had suffered some psychological ailments.

Cattleya then turned to look at The Hanged Man.

"You pick first."

She knew that The World Gehrman Sparrow had commissioned a mystical item to be made by the Artisan. Therefore, The Hanged Man had to first select the crazy adventurer's item first.

Alger nodded and took the Word of the Sea and the Gargoyle Glasses. Then, he indicated that the rest were spoils of war.

Cattleya thought for a moment and said, "Pick another one. The rest will be mine."

She wasn't too interested in the remaining mystical items because she had two rather powerful items that suited her. She had also obtained the Scales of Luck and Judge Button later; thus, covering all her bases. Under such a situation, the stacking of negative effects was something to be considered. Unless it was something extremely special, it wasn't something she would take a second look or choose to exchange.

Of course, as a pirate admiral, she never found mystical items too excessive. After all, she had to hand over some of them to the Moses Ascetic Order and leave the rest to reward her crew.

Alger fell silent for a moment. Starting from what items and Beyonder powers he had, he chose the Blade of Poison.

Following that, Cattleya instructed Bloodless Heath Doyle to move the mystical items that Cielf had placed on the ground, and the remnant items left by the Primordial Moon believers, out of the room.

Then, she looked at the Artisan with her dark purple-hued eyes.

"Why do the Primordial Moon believers want to control you?"

Cielf's eyes flickered.

"Isn't that simple and obvious? To get me to make mystical items for them…”

Just as he said that, his heart skipped a beat as a result of the purple eyes that were coldly looking at him. He hurriedly added, "They also seem to

have some plan that needs the help of an Artisan. As for what it is, I've no idea because it hasn't started."

Cattleya retracted her gaze while seemingly in thought. Exchanging a silent look with The Hanged Man, they nodded simultaneously.

They decided not to take away the Artisan today and to leave him there to monitor the subsequent developments.

In other words, they wanted to figure out the Primordial Moon believers' plans from monitoring him.

Actually, for The Hermit and The Hanged Man, whatever the Primordial Moon believers were plotting wasn't something they cared about. They just each had matters they were concerned about. The former used it to communicate with Queen Mystic to provide her reference material for her strategies in the supernatural world. The latter could use this matter to earn contribution points from the Church; therefore, they had instantly come to a tacit agreement to investigate deeper.

Of course, Alger always believed in a principle:

The more information he wielded, the more benefits he could obtain from various matters!

After a brief silence, Cattleya said to Artisan Cielf in the same tone, "Since you're already a Primordial Moon believer, taking you with me provides me with no benefit."

Cielf nodded immediately, agreeing with what she said.

Cattleya paused for a moment before she said, "However, I wish to establish a long-term working relationship with you. Therefore, I need a few drops of your blood. This will aid me in finding you at any time."

Cielf wore a miserable look as his lips quivered, but he was unable to object to it.

Phew… He suddenly exhaled and said, "Okay."

With that said, he picked up a paper cutter beside him and sliced his forearm, letting a few drops of blood drip out.

Cattleya immediately raised her right arm and gently flicked her wrist, causing the few drops of blood to float and fly towards her.

After observing the blood in her palm, this pirate admiral suddenly asked, "What's your last name?"

"June," Cielf replied instinctively.

Cattleya didn't say a word as she turned around and walked out the door. Alger followed closely behind.

The room quickly turned silent as Cielf sat on the sofa. He sat there motionless for quite a while, as though he was deep in thought over the encounter, being unable to extricate himself from it.

Ten minutes later, he suddenly stood up and took out a small human-shaped figurine from his inside pocket.

The figurine was brass-colored, and its face was empty. Blood slowly seeped out from it and remained on its surface.

Cielf hurriedly wiped the figurine's face with a handkerchief before heaving a sigh of relief. He curled the corners of his lips and silently muttered, *Thankfully I have this Fate Puppet…*

Humph, Let's see how you can find me with those drops of blood! Don't even think of cursing me!

In the poverty-stricken district of Bayam, on a street without any street lamps.

The masked and hooded Alger looked at The Hermit beside him. With a deep voice, he said, "After Cielf escaped from the Church of Steam, he has been living safe and sound to this day. This means he's not a fool. For him to so easily give you the blood in such a relaxed manner without putting up any resistance means that he has the means to avoid your tracking.

"Besides, he didn't mention an explanation of how the Primordial Moon believers found him."

Logically speaking, the believers definitely would've asked him for the origins of the Werewolf Beyonder characteristic, but Cielf hadn't mentioned Alger at all.

As Cattleya took out the pair of heavy glasses and wore it, she said without a change in tone, "It isn't used for tracking."

Alger nodded in thought before bidding her farewell, turning into a dark alley.

He made several detours and found a chance to remove his disguise before leaving Bayam. After he returned to the Resistance's private harbor, he boarded the Blue Avenger.

His sailors had pretty much spent most of their energy and money over the past few days. So at that moment, they were all on the ship, waiting to set off for the seas again.

Upon seeing him return, one of the sailors stood up immediately and asked with a smile, "Captain, have you had dinner?"

"Not yet. Make something simple for me." For the operation, Alger hadn't had a chance to fill his stomach.

The sailor who also did some cooking on the side immediately replied, "Alright. We got some fresh mushrooms in the forest today. How about I pan fry it with some butter?"

"…”

Alger's face twitched as he shook his head with a normal expression.

"Searing a steak would do. Medium rare, uh—Medium-done."

…

East Balam, by the periphery of a forest.

With his two marionettes, Klein wasn't in a rush to leave. He entered a city and planned on getting some dyes to disguise Admiral Hell Ludwell's mask.

And before that, he had other things to do.

It was to seek out a helper for his exploration of the periphery of Calderón!

Klein was never a lone wolf, and it was even more so the case when faced with danger. Therefore, unless he had no options, he would always invite powerhouses to provide him with help by sharing the coordinates and paying the corresponding price. He wasn't one to rashly enter.

To him, being able to obtain the desired ingredient while alive was most important!

If it wasn't because I know it's impossible, I'd even wish to wait one to two weeks before I carry a baby or push a pram to head for Calderón… Klein sighed silently as he took out the adventurer's harmonica and blew into it.

Silently, Reinette Tinekerr with her four heads in hand walked out of the void.

Klein deliberated over his words and said, "I plan on exploring Calderón City soon. Well, I've already obtained its coordinates in the spirit world. I'm wondering if I can hire you for your help? What would be the price?"

The four heads in Reinette Tinekerr's hand spoke one after another:

"Won't do…" I…" "Can't…" "Enter…"

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CHAPTER 924
FIRST KEY FACTOR AT CARRYING OUT RISKY OPERATIONS

Can’t enter… The Seven Lights can’t enter for some special reason… Is this a restriction Calderón City has on higher-level creatures in the spirit world? However, how does Miss Messenger know of this limitation? Has she been there before? If that were the case, I didn’t even need to ask Red Light or the magic mirror… Perhaps her spiritual intuition told her that? As his mind whirred, Klein slowly and silently exhaled.

He then took out a gold coin and handed it to Reinette Tinekerr.

“I understand. Thank you for the information.”

After one of Miss Messenger’s head bit on the gold coin and retreated into the spirit world, Klein allowed his thoughts to roam as he considered how he could find other helpers.

Mr. Azik has entered a state of slumber. It’s unknown when he will wake up. There’s no way to wait for him.

Will Auceptin is about to be born but is only a baby. “He” is still at a nadir. And even if Ma’am Hermit has a way to temporarily restore “His” power while “He” is weak, it’s impossible for “Him” to do something as trivial as being my bodyguard. Besides, once “He” leaves Backlund or showcases his corresponding level, there’s a very high chance that he might once again be locked on by Angel of Fate Ouroboros.

Get the help of a demigod from the Life School of Thought through this Snake of Fate, such as that Councilor Ricciardo? That will be difficult. The Life School of Thought is suffering an internal divide. The Councilors have too many things to do. Besides, they're running all over the world with the Die of Probability to leave traces to divert the Angel of Fate's attention.

Queen Mystic Bernadette? I'm not too familiar with her. Besides, The Fool has demigods and angels under "Him." A Blessed like Gehrman Sparrow can always find other help. Even if I claim that it's a cooperative effort, it will also expose quite significant problems. Sigh, on the surface, The Fool has angels and demigods under "Him," but the actual situation is that at the angel and demigod's side is The Fool who's just photobombing them…

The Chief from the City of Silver? This is indeed something that could be used as a price when he makes a request, but the problem is that he's unable to leave the Forsaken Land of the Gods. I think I should leave this opportunity for the Bizarro Bane…

Those geezers of the Sanguine? There's no suitable reason, and it's very easy for me to be exposed to Lilith. Who knows who that dead ancient goddess who hasn't truly perished is. If "She" is actually the Primordial Moon in disguise, I can forget about resurrection…

Klein thought of one candidate after another, but one by one, he struck them off the list. Finally, he couldn't help but sigh.

When in need, friends are always in short supply!

He couldn't help but think of setting up a ritual to attempt to pray to the Evernight, the Crimson for strength, to seek the blessing of the Goddess, hoping that she could directly bestow him with the true soul body and powder of a Spirit World Plunderer, or have some archbishop, high-ranking deacon, or secret ascetic to provide him with help.

Unfortunately, all he could do was muse over the idea without actually carrying it out. Although Klein was rather accepting of the Evernight

Goddess and wasn’t against the identity of being an Evernight Blessed, he still felt extremely wary. He didn’t wish to rely on a deity’s bestowment for everything. Besides, he suspected that similar rituals wouldn’t have any effect. This was because, with his present level and strength, he had no right to raise conditions with a Sequence o. If the deity was willing to give, then “She” would naturally give it to him. If “She” didn’t, praying was useless.

If I have the shamelessness of Old Neil, I might really try it. Back then, the Goddess was willing to respond to his debt payment and resolve his constipation. “She” dotes on her believers pretty well. Of course, there must be certain “side effects”…Klein recalled the past as he sighed.

He decided to change his train of thought. Since he couldn’t get help from friends, he considered making use of his enemies.

Hmm, perhaps I can bring the Black Emperor card, Tyrant card, and the radio transceiver. I could wait at the entrance of Calderón City. As long as King of the Five Seas Nast, High-Sequence Beyonders of the Church of Storms, or leaders of the Rose School of Thought like Suah and the other demigods and angels rushed over, I will immediately enter that City of the Dead…

No, that’s too explicit. King of the Five Seas Nast and the High-Sequence Beyonders of the Church of Storms are highly unlikely to follow me into Calderón City. Instead, they will stay outside and wait for me to come out…

Abomination Suah might chase after me, but “He” is an angel. “He” wouldn’t be impeded by anything in the periphery of Calderón City. I’ll only be inviting trouble to myself…

After repeated thought, Klein finally gave up the idea of creating chaos for his benefit. He believed that it was difficult to replicate the same situation outside Bayam City from back then. It was even more so when he wasn’t a High-Sequence Beyonder.

A person who treads the edge of the abyss would fall into it sooner or later!

Who else can provide me with help? Klein's gaze swept past his two marionettes as friend after friend flashed past his mind, including the members of the Tarot Club.

Suddenly, he recalled something.

Miss Sharron once told me that the Tutanssess II mummy is one of the keys to her advancement ritual and is very important to her. This also means that she's about to become a demigod, Sequence 4 Puppet of the Mutant pathway…

If she succeeds, I can get her to help. We have had a good partnership.

Thankfully, I chose to help her. Otherwise, I wouldn't have any hope today.

As Klein reeled in poignancy, he took out paper and a fountain pen. Placing the paper on Enzo's back, he scribbled, "It's been a while since we last met. I wonder how you've been recently…"

As he wrote, Klein suddenly stopped. He felt the opening was too off and hypocritical.

Miss Sharron is a person who restrains herself. When she writes letters, she goes straight to the point without saying anything unnecessary. I have to consider her personality and be more frank… Klein thought for a few seconds before raising the previous slip of paper. Shaking it, he made it become engulfed in scarlet flames.

After a few seconds of deliberation, Klein wrote on a new slip of paper:

"I've already acquired the spirit world coordinates of Calderón City. If you've already become a demigod, I wish to cooperate again to receive some help. If not, there's no need to force it. I can still find other friends.

"Sherlock Moriarty"

After folding the slip of paper and addressing it to “Ma’am Maryam,” Klein took out the adventurer’s harmonica again and blew it.

Reinette Tinekerr, in her dark and complicated dress, walked out of the void as though she had never left the vicinity, appearing right in front of him.

Klein handed her the folded slip of paper and a gold coin before seriously exhorting her, “Send it to Backlund, Hillston, 126 Garde Street. Throw it directly into the mailbox.”

“Alright,” one of Reinette Tinekerr’s head said while another head but on the letter and gold coin.

Upon seeing this, Klein pressed, somewhat worried:

“You haven’t lost the previous map, right?

“Do you know which borough Hillston Borough is? Do you know where Garde Street is?”

The three other heads which Reinette Tinekerr held replied, “No…” “I know…” “It’s…” “Very…” “Easy to…” “Find.”

Klein immediately heaved a sigh of relief as he politely sent off Miss Messenger.

He temporarily threw the matter of Calderón City to the back of his mind and began disguising his marionette, Ludwell.

The next morning, a man, with brownish skin, light curly hair, and was dressed in a formal Loen attire and a silk half top hat, entered Ttniks City that bordered a forest with his two servants.

This was a city that mainly produced timber, rubber, and special products from the forest. There was talk in the town that a few hair-growth research centers and the complementing factories were established here.

Having disguised himself as a local, wealthy man, Klein quickly found a hotel to stay in. Sitting on a reclining chair made of rattan, he observed his handiwork once again.

Winner Enzo's skin was not only bronze, but it was now almost completely black. Together with his thin and soft hair, bushy brows, and dark shadowy facial outline, matched with Balam-styled baggy, creased pants and a black-and-white top, he looked like a typical example of a local servant that hailed from a particular plantation manor.

Admiral Hell Ludwell's rather resplendent clothes had become the same style as Enzo's. His exposed skin had clear burn marks, and his silver mask was now dyed with a uniform iron-black color. This made it look as though he had been disfigured due to a fire accident and that he was wearing a mask to hide his face, lest he scared any passersby.

After having his lunch which was served to his room, Klein heard stacked illusory prayers.

Male… Mr. Hanged Man? It's also possible it's Emlyn and Little Sun. The transaction of the Sequence 5 Beyonder characteristic of the Vampire pathway is about to begin… Klein was just about to head for the bathroom to take four steps counterclockwise and head above the gray fog when his spiritual perception was triggered.

He hurried activated his Spirit Vision and saw the headless Reinette Tinekerr appear out of the spirit world which overlapped with the real world with a letter in a head's mouth.

Miss Sharron has replied? Klein first thanked her before receiving the letter and tearing it open to read.

"Sorry, I will likely still need another one to two months of preparation. If you still need my help by then, I'll be fine with it. Sharron."

One to two months… It’s not like I can’t wait… It’s not like I’ve digested my Marionettist potion yet… Klein nodded indiscernibly as he got a pen and some paper to reply simply:

“Take your own time. There’s no rush. My matter isn’t urgent. I can wait. Sherlock Moriarty.”

After handing the letter and gold coin to Reinette Tinekerr and getting her to send it to Backlund, Hillston Borough, 126 Garde Street, Klein suddenly thought of a problem:

During wars, scouting is necessary. How can I be rash and so careless about exploring a dangerous place like Calderón City?

Hmm, when Miss Sharron advances, I can head there to do some scouting and gather some intelligence without the need to take risks. For example, I can figure out exactly what restrictions there are; what kind of anomalies will happen towards Death domain powers; or I can figure out whether I’m only able to enter by a fixed entrance, or if I have any way of directly returning above the gray fog from inside… After confirming all of this, I can formulate a plan and make preparations… Of course, before scouting, divination is necessary… Klein soon made up his mind and walked into the attached bathroom.

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CHAPTER 925
CHOOSING "CLOTHES"

Above the endless grayish-white fog, in the magnificent ancient hall.

Klein didn’t rush to do a divination. He first answered The Hanged Man Alger’s sacrificial ritual and got the cane made from the Ocean Songster Beyonder characteristics to appear in front of him.

Word of the Sea… This name, when transliterated to Chinese, does bring back memories. I’ll just leave it at that… It’s basically a weaker version of Sea God Scepter. It doesn’t have demigod-level powers like Lightning Storm or Tsunami either… There are quite a number of negative effects… As Klein recalled The Hanged Man’s descriptions, he stroked the silver inlaid black cane.

Perhaps the mysterious space above the gray fog had naturally suppressed it, causing this Beyonder cane to not express its living characteristic. It silently lay there like it was the most common and ordinary piece of wood.

Klein nodded slightly and muttered silently to himself, Mystical item with living characteristics are really rather troublesome. But from a different angle, it means that they can be communicated with. The Die of Probability back then was quite a nasty fellow, but didn’t it also become obedient after getting schooled?

Besides, I can always have my servants hold it most of the time. Yes, Winner Enzo will be most suitable. Although he already has zero passive luck, he is still accumulating luck constantly to make preparations for that critical moment. Releasing a little bit of it wouldn’t affect anything. This

way, be it being tripped, thrown, or beaten, he would be able to smoothly avoid it and not garner the attention of others.

On careful thought, the cane's pranks aren't completely useless. If I were to meet other Marionettists, Spirit World Plunderers, or Bizarro Banes and lose my initiative and end up being initially controlled, my thoughts and actions would turn sluggish. It would be quite difficult to extricate myself from that state by myself. At this moment, if an uncontrollable cane were to suddenly hit me or trip me to the ground, wouldn't I be successfully escaping from my predicament?

Sigh, if a mystical item's negative effects are used well, they can be quite a boon…

Of course, in normal combat, such pranks can bring about unnecessary dangers. How it should be balanced or avoided will need repeated trial and error.

As for the negative effects of easily being struck by lightning on a stormy day, Klein didn't mind. Firstly, unless he was in a special region, stormy weather wasn't common to begin with. It wasn't something that needed to be taken into consideration most of the time. Secondly, as a Seer, divining the day's weather before heading out was a common act. Finally, if he couldn't avoid sudden flash storms, Klein could always give the cane to Enzo. This way, even if the lightning were to strike the Winner, it would even up being attracted by a nearby lightning rod.

Let's just hope I'm not that lightning rod… Klein gave a self-deprecating laugh as he considered the most worrisome negative effect.

It would belt out Beyonder singing every six hours!

This was indiscriminate, and it was basically a huge AOE[1] attack!

After some thought, Klein decided to communicate with the Word of Sea cane to reduce the frequency at which it sang, or to give prior warning

before it sang.

I had breakfast early today. It's almost time for Creeping Hunger to start its howling… In thought, Klein removed the human-skinned glove from his left palm and threw it at an empty spot in front of the junk pile.

Right on the heels of that, he lifted the silver inlaid black cane and threw it over. Then, he stirred some of the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog, creating a barrier that isolated all sound and images. He made Creeping Hunger and Word of the Sea spend time alone.

After doing all of this, Klein rubbed his palms and conjured a pen and paper. He wrote down a divination statement: "My scouting of Calderón City's periphery today is dangerous."

After putting down the dark red fountain pen, Klein removed the spirit pendulum from his left wrist. He let the topaz hang down over the paper in close proximity with it.

After chanting seven times in his mind, he opened his eyes and saw the topaz standing still and not spinning

This meant that the divination had failed.

Calderón City's actual situation is a secret to the entire spirit world, and divination lacks a starting point… Besides, that was once a divine kingdom of an ancient goddess. There's a mutated resurrection setup left over there. It can similarly interfere with divination… Klein rolled up his spirit pendulum and deliberated in thought. I can only trust what Red Light said. The danger around Calderón City's periphery isn't that great… Besides, I still have marionettes. I can let them go first and confirm if that place screens the gray fog. If it can, I'll give up. If it doesn't, I'll enter myself.

Klein quickly came to a decision. Without any hesitation, he waved his hand to remove the barrier he had previously created.

Then, he saw the Creeping Hunger which had retreated to the side of the junk pile. It was propping itself up with three fingers while its thumb and pinky were pressing backward on Groselle's Travels. It looked weak and could hardly stand.

At the same time, there was a mouth in the middle of the palm. It revealed two illusory, white, and eerie teeth that kept gasping for air.

On the other side of the barrier, the silver inlaid black cane was on the ground. It twitched from time to time as its tip kept oozing with blue transparent water bubbles.

"Very good, silence at last…" Upon seeing this scene, Klein muttered in gratification.

Just as he said that, the Word of the Sea suddenly stood up. And as though it was being held, it "hopped" towards Klein, circling about The Fool's seat and dodged elsewhere. Creeping Hunger used all its five fingers as legs as it chased after the cane with great difficulty. Midway, it collapsed to the ground.

Klein watched speechless before letting out a sigh.

"After fusing with Mr. A, Creeping Hunger seems to have a living characteristic, but this level of intelligence is way too low. It clearly Grazed a Wind-blessed and is capable of Short-distance Flight; yet, it still uses its fingers as legs to chase…"

After saying that, he turned his head towards the Word of the Sea cane which was hiding beside him.

"Aren't you a Sequence 5 of the Sailor pathway? What kind of mystical item are you if you can only hop on one leg?

"Seriously, are such low-level living characteristics equivalent to babies? No, a particular baby is way smarter than all of you!"

Klein reprimanded each of them and sighed as he said in amusement, “It’s not like I’m a devil…”

Just as he said that, the glove and cane who were still stirring froze at the same moment. They didn’t dare make a sound.

Klein’s subsequent words were left in his throat. All he could do was reach out to pick up Word of the Sea and kindly and sincerely speak to it.

After a friendly and frank negotiation, this silver inlaid black cane used high frequency swaying to gesture that it would reduce its singing to a minimum. If it really couldn’t hold back, it would inform its owner. The exact manner included, but was not limited to, trembling slightly or automatically moving up a few centimeters.

At the same time, it raised a request via singing:

Never use the hand wearing Creeping Hunger to hold it!

Of course, if its master insisted on doing so, it didn’t object to it and was happy to accept it.

Better than Creeping Hunger. It’s not too stubborn… Klein beckoned for Creeping Hunger and wore it on his left palm.

Taking a glance at the Door of Summoning which had been produced from the ritual, Klein began considering the items to bring on his scouting of Calderón City.

Needless to say, the two marionettes were going. They could be used as bait, to scout the path ahead, be used as test subjects, and verify any traps. They allowed a Marionettist to not need to undergo too many dangerous actions, so they were definitely going.

They would be wearing Enzo’s Flower of Blood ring and Ludwell’s Harris Sword. They were all standard equipment. In addition, Klein decided to get

Enzo to carry the Word of the Sea.

As for himself, Klein planned on heading there as a Spirit Body. Once anything was amiss, he would immediately end the summoning and return above the gray fog. This way, what “clothes” he matched was something worth considering.

Azik’s copper whistle? No, that is related to Death, and Calderón City belongs to ancient Death… There’s a small possibility that this might create a terrifying anomaly, causing the danger in the core region to automatically come out.

Black Emperor card or the Tyrant card? Hmm, I’ll be moving about the spirit world. The two marionettes are basically dead. I’m not afraid that they have their blood extracted. Heh heh, Ludwell is a half-human, half-dead entity. He doesn’t have blood to speak of. The value of Enzo’s blood only makes him appear human most of the time. And this could be recovered via using Flower of Blood. It also means that I can bring the Sea God Scepter to Calderón City!

It’s a place that’s deep in the spirit world. It’s far from the Rorsted Archipelago, so I don’t have to worry about being affected by the believers’ prayers. The only problem is that I’ll become irascible and short-tempered. It will be easy for me to become hot-headed… This is taboo when it comes to exploring. However, this is easily resolved. I’ll leave it with Enzo or Ludwell. Besides, the Tyrant card’s level is very high. It can produce a suppression effect to a certain degree on the Sea God Scepter, preventing me from easily flaring up.

With the combination of the Tyrant card and the Sea God Scepter, I’m equivalent to half a Sequence 4. This can then most effectively reduce the risk I face. In the future, even if I were to enter with Miss Sharron, I can also equip myself in such a manner. I’ll get her to maintain her state as a wraith—no, an evil spirit state to circumvent all problems!

I don’t have to worry about the law of convergence. If Calderón City can screen the gray fog, I’ll return after taking a look from the outside. No one will lock onto me or pursue me. After all, the spirit world isn’t the home ground of the Sailor pathway. If Calderón City can’t screen the gray fog, and a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Church of Storms really does get drawn there, I can end up using him… Amidst his thoughts, Klein suddenly reached out his hand, attracting the Tyrant card to fall into his palm.

Immediately after that, he fused the Card of Blasphemy into his Soul Body.

Suddenly, extreme might and terrifying auras emanated from The Fool’s location. A heavy papal tiara silently appeared on Klein’s head as his clothes turned into a religious robe.

The latter was similar in dressing as a pope from Saint Seiya: Knights of the Zodiac which he had seen in his previous life. However, the colors were dark blue that was almost black.

As howling winds sounded, the pontiff robe flared up suddenly as Klein raised his right hand and suspended himself in midair before catching the white bone scepter that flew towards him.

At the tip of the scepter, the gems emitted either blinding silver or blue light like bolts of lightning that circled around the Tyrant.

With a thud, the Word of the Sea cane prostrated to the ground, right beside Klein who was wielding the scepter and dressed like a pontiff.

[1] Area of Effect.

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CHAPTER 926
SPIRALING CITY

I really do feel a little irascible, but I’m not that quick-tempered… Wearing the papal tiara and dark blue robes while wielding the Sea God Scepter, Klein seriously observed his new state.

This meant that the Tyrant card could suppress the negative effects of the Sea God Scepter to a certain extent, but it wasn’t able to completely eliminate it.

Using Cogitation, Klein composed himself and turned to look at the junk pile in the corner.

Groselle’s Travels? This is my strongest defensive item to this day. Besides, it also has some magical uses, but the problem is that it was made by another ancient god, Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt. Based on what Little Sun said, this dragon king was once allies with the owner of Calderón City-Ancient Death, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace. Who knows if this book would trigger any unnecessary developments… To be safe, it’s best if I don’t bring it.

And just like Azik’s copper whistle, the mutated paper figurine can’t be included. It has the remnant aura of Artificial Death… This might have a shock-and-awe effect when exploring Calderón City, but it also contains plenty of latent risks.

The Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic? This can effectively restrain dead spirits, a natural nemesis for the City of the Dead, but it’s only an ingredient that hasn’t been made into a mystical item. The effects it has is rather limited. The negative effects are extremely bad. It won’t be helpful to

my soul state. In addition, lightning can also purify the dead. With the Sea God Scepter and Word of the Sea, there's no need for me to bring the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic… Thoughts flashed across Klein's mind as he eliminated the remaining items in the junk pile.

He wore the human-skinned glove on his left hand, wielded Sea God Scepter, and raised his right hand slightly. He made Word of the Sea fly up and land in his palm.

Following that, the papal-dressed Klein changed the appearance of his soul. He hid his facial features within the shadows of the papal tiara.

He slowly stood up as the dark blue robes fluttered in the wind, the white bone scepter dazzling.

With just one step, Tyrant Klein passed through the Door of Summoning and walked out of the candlelight, arriving in the real world. He found himself in the rather spacious bathroom.

After adding the Fate Siphon charm and Death Knell into his body, he opened the door and returned to the living room. He got Enzo to come over to receive Word of the Sea.

After some thought, Klein took out Death Knell and handed it to Admiral Hell Ludwell.

After doing all of this, he brought his two marionettes and relied on Traveling to head for the coordinates in the spirit world that were provided by Miss Magician.

The trip happened rather smoothly. The Tyrant aura made all kinds of strange spirit world creatures not dare to approach him while en route. They didn't even dare look at him directly. Before long, Klein arrived at his destination.

The scene in front of him looked no different from anywhere else in the spirit world. The saturated colors were overlapped, and there was some thin fog emanating everywhere. Elsewhere, in the depths, pairs of eyes moved away one after another.

The papal robe's cape fluttered gently in the wind as Klein did a rough scan before getting Enzo and Ludwell to enter a blob of fog that appeared very thin and normal.

Suddenly, his field of vision widened with the help of his two marionettes. A grand city that was of legendary proportions appeared in his eyes. This city was abnormal. It didn't develop in a vertical manner, but instead spiraled deep into the ground. It gave one the feeling of an inverted mausoleum.

Its buildings had a myriad of styles, but they were equally strange. Some of them had towering pale-white rock columns with a huge single house carved out at the top. Some were long and squarish, with the doors placed at the ceiling with no windows in sight. Some were built in the ground, a tombstone erected at their entrances. Some were built with white bones, messy and scattered.

The closer it was to the bottom of the pit, the more completely preserved the buildings were. The closer they were to the top, the more collapsed areas there were, ones filled with the dilapidation and rot that time brought.

Klein made his two marionettes stop. Despite standing at the edge of the city and overlooking everything, he was unable to identify what was at the bottom of the building. Deep darkness enveloped the area as though no light had been shone inside for thousands and thousands of years.

After a brief observation, Enzo lowered his head and chanted using ancient Hermes:

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

“The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

“The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Just as he finished the statement, Klein, who was still situated outside Calderón City, heard stacked illusory pleas. He also recognized it to be from a man with a deliberately hoarse voice.

It’s the marionette’s prayer from before… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he silently muttered, “This means that Calderón City doesn’t screen out the gray fog. At the very least, the outer periphery doesn’t. I can enter.”

Although he said that to himself, he was in no way in a hurry. He subsequently controlled Ludwell to raise his left palm and spread it open.

Illusory light was suddenly emitted. Following that, with a point as its origin, the area imploded, forming a pair of double bronze doors.

This door was slightly blurry and extremely incorporeal. The surface was covered with countless mysterious patterns that gave one the feeling of indescribable heaviness and silence.

With a creak, the mysterious bronze door shifted backward and cracked open a little.

Through this crack, Klein saw the deepest and heaviest darkness.

Amidst the darkness, pale-white colors stirred, swirling up at times and descending at other times. It was like a river that was gushing through a night devoid of light.

On its two sides, pale white stone columns appeared, looking extremely identical to Calderón City’s interior but in a more exaggerated manner.

At this moment, pairs of transparent eyes and indescribable faces suddenly appeared. They filled the illusory bronze door’s crack, eagerly trying to

pass through

Klein’s eyes felt a slight stabbing pain as he immediately made Ludwell clench his left palm.

Thud!

The illusory door covered in mysterious patterns was pushed by an invisible force as it closed, disappearing from Enzo’s sight.

This mysterious door that separates life from death and leads to the Underworld has apparently changed its course. It’s no longer the Underworld behind the door, but the core region of Calderón City. The deepest point at the bottom of the pit? Wearing the papal tiara while wielding the Sea God Scepter, Klein nodded in thought.

This way, many of the powers of the Death domain was remade in Calderón City, causing an anomaly.

With this knowledge in mind, Klein once again got Ludwell to raise his left arm.

The left part of this marionette’s body rapidly turned illusory as dark green specks appeared as though he had turned into a wraith or specter.

His arm began to stop abiding by the laws of reality as it suddenly extended into the distance. The center of its palm was abnormally white with an illusory face protruding from it.

The face had its mouth half-open as its tongue was sharp like a snake’s. It was covered in white fur.

In a completely surreal manner, the tongue flicked out far into the distance. It was as though it could drill directly into a human’s body and absorb one’s soul.

Indeed, the Death Envoy powers Ludwell gets from the Underworld creature inside his body has mutated. Not only has it been enhanced, but it has also gone from remotely extracting Spirit Bodies to directly consuming them… Klein stood at Calderón City's entrance and made Admiral Hell display all kinds of Beyonder powers of the Death domain. Through that, he gleaned the differences that there were from the usual outcome.

The thing they had in common was that all of them had become more powerful!

Then, Klein experimented by making Enzo use the specialness of his body and the various powers from Flower of Blood and Word of the Sea before coming up with a conclusion.

Aspects in the Fate domain aren't affected…

Lightning Strike is suppressed, making it much weaker…

Unable to fly too high…

Powers like wind blades, singing, illusory scales, balance, and water membrane undergo no changes…

With the end of these experiments, Klein made Enzo and Ludwell walk down the pale-white stairs, clinging closely to the periphery of Calderón City. The buildings there had already completely collapsed.

As the two-hundred-meter threshold approached, Klein raised his right hand and pressed down on his face that hid in the shadows of the papal tiara. Then, wielding the Sea God Scepter, he stepped into the thin fog.

His mind instantly felt a little groggy as the scene before him changed. He had already entered the City of the Dead, Calderón City.

Enduring the irascible feelings within him, Klein made his left glove turn dark.

His body turned illusory as it was tainted by a dark color, turning him into a shadow. Only the Sea God Scepter in his hand continued emitting silver or blue beams of light.

Using the soul's screening and the Tyrant card's suppression to hide the light, Klein floated diagonally ahead, slinking into the shadows of the collapsed buildings. He followed closely behind the two marionettes, beginning to perform an initial inspection of Calderón City's outer region.

As he traversed the area, Klein gradually noticed something amiss.

It was too quiet!

It was so quiet that it was as though the entire city was dead. Even bugs had failed to survive!

Based on what Arrodes and Red Light Aiur Moria had said, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace had uprooted Calderón City and thrown it deep into the spirit world. Before doing so, the residents inside the city were allowed to leave. Occasionally, there would be other spirit world creatures entering.

But now, not only were there no active creatures in the peripheral region, there weren't even skeletons, zombies, or even one or two non-bonelike buildings!

Klein tensed up more and more. With Enzo's and Ludwell's vision, he carefully observed his surroundings.

During this process, his gaze swept across a broken pale-white column. The ancient but damaged building at the top had a disc burnished from gold inside.

The disc's smooth surface reflected a figure, but it wasn't Enzo, but Klein in his papal tiara and dark blue robe!

This Klein had a gloomy demeanor. His face was pale and his eyes were listless as though he had long been dead.

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CHAPTER 927
TYRANT'S MIGHT

Hiding in the shadows, Klein’s heart tightened. He then quickly calmed down without showing any signs of horror.

This was because he was extremely certain that the reflection on the golden disc’s smooth surface wasn’t him—at least, it wasn’t the real him!

If it really was him, Enzo would’ve seen the gray fog, seeing magical scenes that resembled a Mythical Creature form. This would’ve caused Klein to faint immediately!

Since I’m completely fine, it means that the reflection isn’t of me… Klein activated his Spirit Body Threads vision, controlled Enzo, and raised Word of the Sea. He approached the pale-white collapsed column and the ancient building which remained in shambles while secretly releasing some of his “luck.”

The swarthy marionette approached the golden disc one step at a time. Bending his back and raising the cane, he carefully observed the area.

The disc had two layers-an inner and outer layer. The core region was as smooth as a mirror with very few patterns. The boundaries were engraved with birdlike creatures. Its entirety had an ancient magnificence to it.

The figure it reflected remained the same. Despite reflecting Enzo, it reflected the gloomy, pale Klein with listless eyes. Even the Sea God Scepter, the papal tiara and papal robe that came with the Tyrant card weren’t missing. If it wasn’t because of the lack of the gray fog, Klein definitely would’ve imagined that the disc could influence himself through

a marionette and Spirit Body Threads. Or perhaps it would be like what the Saint of Darkness back at the ruins of the battle of gods had encountered, having himself dissociate without realizing it.

What does this actually mean… Klein calmly grew out of the shadows, restoring his appearance back when he first stepped into Calderón City. Then, using his Beyonder powers as a Clown, he produced his present state in his mind.

Holding the white bone scepter with embedded blue gems, he wore a caped papal robe with a papal tiara with different gems dotting it. His face was hidden in the shadows, appearing somewhat blurry. His entire body exhibited a gloomy and cadaveric air, as though he was a zombie that was recently dug out!

This… Klein was alarmed. He never expected to really experience such changes. Apart from the gray fog's mixing with reality, the reflection on the golden disc really was him!

Something that it doesn't involve the gray fog, it isn't anything to worry too much about… he hurriedly consoled himself as he calmed his mental state.

Normally, with Klein's rich experience and good ability to adapt, there was nothing he needed to do at the moment. But first, considering how he was holding the Sea God Scepter that easily made him rash, he needed to pay constant attention. Second, he knew that this was once Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace's divine kingdom which contained the setup required for "Her" revival. There was bound to be all kinds of abnormalities. Therefore, he was more nervous than ever before.

Getting Ludwell to return, he used his Beyonder powers to do a thorough inspection of himself before gaining a preliminary understanding.

When living creatures enter Calderón City, they will naturally transform into the deceased. This is similar to the Underworld, but there's a fundamental difference. Here, living creatures won't die an abrupt death

before slowly turning into mindless undead creatures; instead, they will directly turn into dead spirits.

I didn’t notice it before because Enzo and Ludwell are essentially dead, so there’s no need for them to be converted… Arrodes and Red Light Aiur Moria didn’t mention this because the Travelers, spirit world creatures, and angels automatically recovered after leaving alive? This kind of transformation is unable to affect the powers of the gray fog that fuses with reality. And the disc reflects the dead me, not all of me, or the me that has had some interaction with Calderón? Klein was more inclined to believe in the latter, but he wasn’t too sure.

At this moment, he heard a sound coming from nearby.

Clang!

Clang! Clang!

The sound was heavy but crisp, as though someone was striking metal heavily.

Klein wasn’t in a hurry to react. He carefully listened for two seconds before letting Enzo put down the heavy golden disc and walk towards a nearby broken tombstone.

The halved tombstone corresponded to a building that developed further underground. On top of it were the words written with the Language of the Dead:

“…A quick-tempered fellow, one who died as a result of comparing which was harder—his head or someone else’s hammer.”

Enzo circled around the damaged tombstone and arrived at the entrance to the tomb. He reached out his left hand and turned the knob, pulling open the door.

Amidst the rough grinding sounds of rust, the heavy door slowly opened.

Sou! Sou! Sou!

Pale-white beams of arrow-like light flew out!

They brushed past Enzo's face, the top of his head, torso, and inner thighs and flew into the distance, stabbing into the ground before vanishing. However, Winner Enzo was completely unharmed.

…I have to say that such a marionette is excellent for dangerous explorations… Klein sighed inwardly as he made Enzo cast his gaze down the building.

It was a blacksmith-a giant with bluish-black skin and a head that looked like a ruptured watermelon held onto a hammer as he kept striking an anvil, but there was nothing on it.

As the giant with the cracked head had normal Spirit Body Threads and wasn't the soul avatar of someone else, Klein secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Just as he was about to get Enzo to take a more thorough look, his body suddenly turned numb as his thoughts turned sluggish.

This feeling was something he had felt before. Back in Tingen, he had been in a similar state when he was under Sealed Artifact 2-049's influence!

Klein didn't know better back then, but after becoming a Marionettist, he knew that this meant that his Spirit Body Threads had been controlled by the Sealed Artifact!

This also meant that someone was controlling his Spirit Body Threads!

Furthermore, the difference from before was that, not only were his joints "rusting" as though someone had infused glue into them, he also felt a

strong numbness as if he had been struck by lightning. It made his actions become harder.

No good… It's the Spirit World Plunderer… I was guarded against… its use of soul avatar… It distracted me… and secretly approached… but I never expected… that it not only had a soul avatar… but it also… has a partner… That… giant… blacksmith… made me… careless… And the marionette's… existence… made me… ignore… my own… safety… Various thoughts emerged in Klein's mind involuntarily as it disrupted his normal thoughts of trying to save himself.

At this moment, the giant blacksmith with a ruptured head raised his hammer and rushed over to Enzo, hoping to smash him into a pulp. And by Klein's neck, there was a cold wind blowing at it, pricking his hair up one by one.

The surroundings were abnormally silent before, but now, all kinds of strange creatures emerged from the pale-white stone column, rundown houses, and the tombstone's tomb.

Some of them only had half a body. Others were transparent and nearly invisible. Some were stretched and soft like noodles. Some had a ruptured chest with bloody innards. Some had dark green faces that resembled that of an evil spirit. Others had eyes growing everywhere around their body. There were also others who looked like jellyfish that lived in the air.

Countless gazes were cast onto Klein from different areas. They were without any feelings, just indifferent.

At this moment, Klein opened his mouth with great difficulty as he said a word slowly:

"Sing…"

Just as he said that, the glove on his left palm opened its mouth, revealing its white teeth:

“Praise you!

“The Lord that created everything;

“The Lord who reigns behind the curtain of shadows;

“The degenerated nature of all living things!”

Amidst this jarring voice that resembled blackboard scratching sounds, Enzo, who had been thrown to the ground, successfully avoided the hammer’s strike as Word of the Sea began spewing out water bubbles in excitement.

“Break! Break! Break!”

Klein suddenly felt his head ache as his ability to think was instantly recovered, no longer having disconnected thoughts for a brief moment.

However, his body remained “rusted” as his body was filled with numbness.

Following that, he relied on his spirituality while motionless, controlling Ludwell, who had returned to his side, to punch him with his left fist.

Bang!

Klein staggered back, instantly extricating himself from the numb and sluggish state.

Then, wearing the papal tiara, he became hot-headed as he spread his papal cape and raised Sea God Scepter.

The blue gems lit up one after another as a bright silver bolt of lightning blasted down.

The bolt of lightning spread into “branches,” blanketing Calderón City’s periphery for hundreds of meters with a lightning forest. The destructive aura and sense of destruction were brought to the forefront!

The strange creatures that had charged out from various spots shattered, evaporated, and completely vanished as a result of the swath of silver.

Moments after the silver storm quelled, Tyrant Klein’s Sea God Scepter emitted a blinding light once again.

The rapturous bolts of lightning snaked, embroiled the area, smiting down again and again like a huge wave.

After two repeated casts of Lightning Storm, Klein was exhausted as he found his calm again.

His heart beat suddenly as he recalled something.

Lightning Storm was indiscriminate when it struck. Apart from the Sea God Scepter-wielding him and the partner who stood beside him, everything else suffered a decimating blast!

This also meant that Ludwell was still fine, but there was a high chance of Enzo being “wiped out.”

Klein instinctively looked over and saw Enzo curled by the side of the halved tombstone. Behind him was the huge metallic hammer which still had tiny bolts of lightning snaking around. Not far from it was two nonhuman charred legs.

The tomb corresponding to the tombstone had already collapsed. The iron-black tiles that landed on the ground still had remnant silver bolts of lightning sizzling away.

…As expected of a Winner. He didn’t even die despite such an onslaught… The amount of luck he accumulated has probably been passively

expended… Klein felt relieved as he activated his Spirit Body Threads vision to observe his surroundings.

He was searching for the Spirit World Plunderer!

He believed that the range of a Spirit World Plunderer's controlling of Spirit Body Threads couldn't match that of a Lightning Storm!

The already dilapidated buildings had nearly been leveled. The remaining stone pieces and bones were mostly charred black. Even the heavy golden disc was in shambles.

Suddenly, a figure emerged from the rubble more than a hundred meters away from Klein.

It was wearing a translucent white robe. It didn't have a head or limbs. It appeared like it was being propped up by an invisible person.

At that moment, it looked like it was in a sorry state, with wounds and black marks everywhere.

This is the Spirit World Plunderer I suppose… My rash usage of two Lightning Storms seems to have restrained it… Upon seeing this scene, Klein had such thoughts flash through his mind.

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CHAPTER 928
MISDIRECTION

At his point, Klein had roughly understood the situation.

Due to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, he had been targeted by the Spirit World Plunderer the moment he entered Calderón City, which didn’t even have ordinary dead spirits. It first moved the golden disc of unknown origins to the predicted path, allowing his marionette to see it while walking past. As such, his attention was transferred to the transformation effect Calderón City had on the living. Following that, it used the giant blacksmith, which wasn’t its soul avatar, to distract him further. Finally, it secretly arrived within control distance and achieved success in “one

try.”

If it wasn’t because I had seen those deceased bodies that are hung up like wind chimes at the cathedral, thus having an instinctual fear of High-Sequence Beyonders of the Seer pathway, and having prepared several autonomous means to disrupt any exertion of control over me, I might’ve already been made a soul avatar by the Spirit World Plunderer…

Seriously, I should’ve thought of the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence before I came in… After carrying the Sea God Scepter, even with the Tyrant card suppressing it, I’m still a little too rash. I nearly missed out on such a crucial detail…

On the surface, I did seem as cautious as I usually am, but in fact, I had turned rash without realizing it. Yet, I didn’t even believe I was being

rash… Klein’s thoughts raced before he raised the bone scepter-wielding arm and continued using Lightning Storm.

If once wasn’t enough, make it twice. If that still wasn’t enough, do it a third time. In short, he had to take this opportunity to prevent the Spirit World Plunderer from escaping from the range of his attacks!

This was the safest method, and it was also Klein’s fighting style that he looked up to the most. If it wasn’t because Lightning Strike had been greatly weakened in Calderón City, he even suspected that he could’ve gone over to pick up the Beyonder characteristic already.

And having already digested most of the Sequence 5 potion, his spirituality was sufficient enough for him to deal out such damage for a while!

At this moment, the “invisible” figure wearing a translucent white robe burst into pale-white flames. It appeared in midair several hundred meters away.

The Spirit World Plunderer had used Flaming Jump, which was many times stronger than Klein’s version, instantly pulling away from him!

At the same time, in the rubble it was hiding in, a four-meter-tall bluish-black giant staggered to his feet.

The giant’s chest was open, but there weren’t any innards. However, it stood like a castle, standing in between the Tyrant and the Spirit World Plunderer, blocking Klein’s line of sight.

And in Klein’s eyes, its Spirit Body Threads were gathered together, extending far towards the Spirit World Plunderer. It was obvious that it was a soul avatar.

At the tip of the Sea God Scepter, the blue-colored gems lit up. A few bolts of lightning leapt out of thin air, mixing together into a huge silver arrow. Instantly, it smote the bluish-black giant’s head.

All the invisible defenses shattered, and like paper mache, the giant’s head cracked. Countless bits of charred flesh splattered as his headless body evaporated amidst white gases that were tainted with dark green spots. All his vitality was robbed away.

All of this happened in the blink of an eye. Klein, in his papal tiara and papal robe, raised the bone scepter even higher.

The blue light radiated in ripples as howling wind blew up his cape.

In a very large area of Calderón City’s periphery, dark clouds quickly gathered. Under a suppressive layer, they made the area appear darker and more repressed.

Smack! Smack! Smack!

Bean-sized drops of water smashed to the ground, releasing dust that had accumulated over time.

Splash!

The raindrops pattered at an increasing pace, forming a catastrophic storm.

The water extinguished the pale-white flames and formed a stream that gushed downwards towards the lowest point of the city, right for the end of the deep pit.

In such weather, Klein’s Flaming Jump had been made ineffective, but it was likewise for the Spirit World Plunderer!

However, to a Tyrant, his spirituality could spread through the dark clouds as though he had transformed into a deity that overlooked the land.

Every dark cloud, every drop of water had become Klein’s eyes. They allowed him to easily find the Spirit World Plunderer in every area that had its weather change.

This invisible figure with the translucent white robe was hiding behind a broken pale-white column. It hadn’t left the periphery for the core region.

Boom!

A deafening boom sounded as bolts of lightning meshed to form a silver beam that shot out from the dark clouds, right at the Spirit World Plunderer.

Relying on its potent spiritual premonition, the invisible figure burrowed into the ground half a second early.

Three thick silver beams smote the area one after another, melting the soil away as they sank downwards, producing charred craters.

The Spirit World Plunderer emerged from another spot as it hurriedly dodged, keeping to the right at times and left at other times, as though it was carrying out a snaking dodge manoeuver.

However, regardless of where it fled to, the silver beams would chase up to it. They even blocked its path ahead of time, preventing it from attempting to leave the stormy region.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The deity akin to a Tyrant, who looked down from the dark clouds at the Spirit World Plunderer, waved his scepter and struck down again and again at his target, with success barely eluding him several times.

Klein turned more and more anxious, eager to immediately end the hunt. Hence, he unreservedly triggered the Sea God Scepter to increase the frequency at which bolts of lightning struck down.

Suddenly, he felt a strong sense of exhaustion.

This alarmed Klein for he realized that something was amiss.

The Spirit World Plunderer had the chance of retreating deeper into Calderón City at the beginning, so why is it staying around?

It's clearly a spirit world creature without a physical body. It can burrow underground to avoid the lightning and a Tyrant's notice, so why is it circling around from time to time?

It's trying to make me attack. It has noticed that I'm not a demigod through my Spirit Body Threads and my control over my marionettes. It wishes to drain me of my spirituality! Klein was alarmed. Combining it with his original encounter, he came to a realization of how intelligent the Spirit World Plunderer was. It was a rather crafty creature.

At the same time, he also thought of a problem:

Could Lightning Storm and the stormy rain attract the notice of dangerous existences in the core region of Calderón City?

I'm too rash. I keep neglecting the critical details… As thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein put away the Sea God Scepter.

The heavy storm stopped as the dark clouds quickly scattered, the weather restoring to normal.

Klein made Enzo return to his side with Word of the Sea, and he got Ludwell to protect him in the middle.

Following that, he and his two marionettes walked out as though they were trying to leave Calderón City while he still had some spirituality left.

During this process, Klein had his Spirit Body Threads vision constantly activated to prevent the Spirit World Plunderer from approaching him.

He noticed that this creature's Spirit Body Threads were somewhat special. A portion of them came out from its body and extended outwards normally.

A number materialized externally and were bound together in a thick bundle, right into the translucent white robe.

Klein suspected that this was the state when a Spirit World Plunderer controlled a soul avatar, making it different from a Marionettist.

As he shifted his gaze, he suddenly saw thin black illusory threads coming out from a collapsed house. A portion of them gathered into a thick bunch with its source in the distance.

Klein didn’t hesitate to raise his Sea God Scepter, creating a sonorous thunderclap.

Boom!

Amidst this sound that struck awe into one’s mind and spirit, Ludwell suddenly raised his left hand.

Half his body instantly turned illusory as his arm extended out extensively, heading straight for the collapsed house.

Midway, his palm turned abnormally pale-white. An illusory face protruded out and stuck out with a snakelike tongue which had white fur covering its surface.

The tongue reached out far, penetrating the wall and stabbing at the spot where the Spirit Body Threads were gathered. It immediately sucked on a distorted and blurry soul.

Around the soul, a number of Spirit Body Threads suddenly disappeared as though they never existed.

A portion of them was none other than the gathered bundle, the ones that came from afar!

They were fake!

The Spirit World Plunderer was able to create fake, illusory Spirit World Plunderers or instantly swap location between the soul avatar and itself!

Klein suddenly turned his head and looked elsewhere. Indeed, he saw a blob of Spirit Body Threads swim over from underground at a fast speed.

He once again used Sea God Scepter, releasing a thunderclap close to the ground, one that could awe his Spirit Body.

Meanwhile, Enzo expended some of his remaining luck, adding bad luck to the target. Then, he shot out a silver bolt of lightning from the tip of the Word of the Sea.

The bolt of lightning rather luckily passed through a crack and entered the ground, striking the assailant directly. It caused a portion of the Spirit Body Threads to instantly vanish.

It was also fake!

Just as Klein reacted, his thoughts paused and his body turned numb.

Just as he opened his mouth with great difficulty to instruct the mystical item, the invisible figure in the translucent robe descended from above, landing right before him.

The Spirit World Plunderer had been hiding high in the sky, cloaking itself with the grayish-white clouds!

The moment this invisible figure appeared, maggots began crawling out of its collar where its head should be. They were maggots with strange patterns covering them.

Just one look at them sent his mind reeling. Although he broke out of the control of his Spirit Body Threads, he also lost his ability to think.

His face that was shadowed by the papal tiara began to grow meat tendrils. Each tendril was relatively transparent, like squirming worms.

If it wasn’t for the Tyrant card’s level supporting him, he would’ve fallen to the ground while struggling in pain.

The Spirit World Plunderer had a Mythical Creature form to a certain extent.

At this moment, the invisible figure inside the white robe began to control Klein’s Spirit Body Threads without any obstacles in the way. In a few seconds, it was already close to succeeding.

Seeing that its prey was about to become its soul avatar, the Spirit World Plunderer suddenly saw its target open his mouth with great difficulty and say a word.

He had recovered from the state of nearly losing control faster than it had anticipated. And the word was in ancient Hermes: “Fate!”

It was the incantation for the Fate Siphon charm!

If Klein really wanted to leave, he would’ve grabbed his two marionettes and directly ended the summoning to return above the gray fog. He wouldn’t have walked to Calderón City’s entrance.

He was planting a trap for the Spirit World Plunderer!

The reason why he could recover so quickly from the injuries dealt to him by a Mythical Creature form, and why he was able to chant the relevant word, was because he had experienced such situations too many times. Besides, although he wasn’t sure what method his opponent was using, there was definitely a rather well-rounded way to deal with it-make his target unlucky.

Just as Klein entered a sluggish state, his first reaction wasn’t to make the mystical item sing, but to let Enzo expend all his luck, making the Spirit World Plunderer have enough bad luck!

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CHAPTER 929
TRUE SOUL BODY

“Fate!”

As the dragged out and abstruse ancient Hermes term resounded, the spots where the Spirit World Plunderer and Klein stood suddenly darkened.

It wasn’t very obvious, as though a cloud had drifted over in midair without stopping.

But when this illusionary shadow dissipated, the invisible figure that was donning a translucent white robe stood frozen on the spot. The surface of its clothes showed signs of worms crawling across it. It was sluggish, slow, and in a dire state.

Across it, Klein’s eyes had their lucidity return. The meat tendrils on the shadowed face beneath the papal tiara vanished.

It appeared as though it wasn’t the Spirit World Plunderer who had controlled Klein’s Spirit Body Threads and nearly succeeded; instead, it appeared as though Klein was the one who was controlling it and had nearly converted it into his marionette!

The Fate Siphon charm switched one’s fate!

This was a high-level charm made using a Worm of Time. It could siphon off the target’s subsequent fate, and in a short period of time, burden it with that of the target’s, so as to complete an exchanging of fates.

Therefore Klein and the Spirit World Plunderer’s situations had switched. One went from death to survival, while the other went from victory to instant despair.

After confirming that the Spirit World Plunderer was intelligent and extremely difficult to deal with, making it difficult to hunt it, Klein began putting on an act of retreating. He appeared rash as he deliberately walked into the Spirit World Plunderer’s control, enticing its actions, ready to use the Fate Siphon charm at the critical moment!

That way, what terrible acts the Spirit World Plunderer did to its enemy, the charm would then allow it to experience the same despair!

Of course, if the Fate Siphon charm didn’t have the expected effect, or if the Spirit World Plunderer’s main soul didn’t appear and had ended up using other means to control the situation, Klein still had his last trick up his sleeve to protect himselfdirectly end the summoning and return above the gray fog. He would sacrifice his two marionettes and a few mystical items in order to ensure his own safety.

Without the time to marvel at how magical the Fate Siphon charm was, or how terrifying angels from the Marauder pathway were, Klein didn’t hesitate to raise the Sea God Scepter high up before the swapping of fates ended.

The dark blue papal robe flared up with the wind as the golden papal tiara emitted meshed blue and silver beams of light. At the tip of the white bone scepter, it shot out bolts of lightning that gathered into a ball before landing on the Spirit World Plunderer’s body!

A swath of silver color brightened up immediately, inundating the target, turning the surroundings white.

Once, twice, thrice. Klein continuously triggered terrifying lightning balls, expending his spirituality without holding back.

Finally, he heard a roar that seemed to stem from the depths of one's soul as he instinctively sensed that his target had collapsed and dissipated.

Only then did Klein lower the Sea God Scepter and watch the silver lightning sizzle away.

At that moment, his entire Spirit Body had turned rather illusory. Even with the Tyrant's augmentation, it didn't seem real.

As the lightning dispersed, the invisible figure in the white translucent robe appeared once again in Klein's sight.

Flickering light emerged from within as the Spirit World Plunderer's body cracked, turning into countless illusory bubbles that disintegrated bit by

bit.

The Tyrant had succeeded in the hunt.

At this moment, deep within Calderón City, there was a sudden quake. It was as though a massive creature had awoken as a result of the Spirit World Plunderer's death, or that countless dangerous creatures were surging out.

The indescribable feeling combined into a swath of illusory grayish-white and, like a tidal wave, rose up from the bottom.

Other Spirit World Plunderers? No, it appears to be a more terrifying and horrible creature. A being that the Spirit World Plunderer attends to? Also, in Calderón City's core region, at the end of the deep pit, it's still as silent as ever. There's no sound at all, making it more horrifying… Klein pumped himself up as he diverted some attention in order to monitor the situation inside Calderón City as he anxiously waited for the Spirit World Plunderer's characteristic to appear to form an ingredient.

He wasn't relishing in the delight of a successful hunt but was pacing about anxiously at the edge of the abyss.

During this process, Klein got Enzo and Ludwell to stay close to him. He threw the Sea God Scepter to the former so as to escape the state of irascibility. He began considering how to deal with the subsequent development with a clear mind, as well as consider whether he had missed out on some other details.

As the thoughts flashed in his mind, Klein suddenly recalled something:

Back when he made the mystical items sing, Creeping Hunger had praised the True Creator and had used “His” complete honorific name.

Although the human-skinned glove had used Hermes instead of ancient Hermes or other languages that could stir the powers of nature, the former was still usable when it came to sacrifices! This also meant that the True Creator might’ve very well heard Creeping Hunger’s praises and noticed the commotion here.

Apart from the rising grayish-white tide and the terrifying creature deep down in the city, there are other dangers… Wait, I’m now a Spirit Body, equivalent to a wraith. I’m not in my normal state… Just as Klein’s mind thought of something, his spiritual perception was triggered as he instinctively cast his gaze at the entrance to Calderón City.

The lights there flickered as a figure entered.

The figure was wearing a simple and ordinary linen robe with a head of silver hair.

He was a handsome man with soft facial features. His eyes were gentle with some hints of coldness. It was as though he was observing the fates of everyone in the world like a spectator.

Behind him, there were beams forming illusory layers of pure wings. They spread outwards, blocking the entire entrance.

ILI

Klein nearly hissed through the gaps in his teeth as a series of titles and names flashed across his mind:

Ouroboros!

Tail Devourer!

Angel of Fate!

King of Angels!

He didn’t have the luxury of time to consider the possibility of his previous thought. His body expanded as though it was incorporeal, enveloping his marionettes, Enzo and Ludwell, the yet-to-appear characteristic, and the Spirit World Plunderer’s remnant bubbles within!

At this moment, Ouroboros’s silver eyes already had the distant figure in “His” sights. It was a figure wearing a papal tiara and a dark blue robe, exuding extreme oppression and tyranny. There was a grayish-white fog that had been blurred by the Tyrant’s aura.

A river of flickering light appeared in “His” eyes, seeming to circle the Tyrant figure and the periphery of Calderón City.

Silently, the square houses and the pale-white columns stood up again despite being destroyed by the Lightning Storm from before. The charred legs of the giant blacksmith once again possessed a body as he appeared inside the tomb, striking at the anvil.

All of this returned to what it was like shortly after the Tyrant stepped in.

However, Klein in his pontiff attire had vanished. His two marionettes along with the remnant bubbles of the Spirit World Plunderer had vanished as well.

The corresponding figure was unable to return as the rebooted scene shattered, turning back to the desolate state after the battle.

Tail Devourer Ouroboros watched silently for a long while before making a move. The grayish-white swath that rose up from the depth of Calderón City slowly receded back down.

Above the gray fog, Klein slumped in the high-back chair of The Fool in exhaustion. He wasn't even able to get Enzo and Ludwell to massage him.

He had already thrown the Sea God Scepter back to the junk pile. The Tyrant card had left his soul body and was placed facing down beside the Black Emperor card. The Spirit World Plunderer's bubbles were floating ahead, with the Beyonder characteristic constantly seeping out before combining with the points of light.

After resting for a while, Klein saw grayish-white powder fall onto the mottled table's surface. Following that was a transparent item that seemed weightless.

The item was the size of a palm, formed by coiled maggots. It was almost shaped like a human, and its interior was filled with a colorless liquid. Bubbles often emerged, scattering black hints of light.

Klein didn't dare to look at it carefully, as there was a more complicated structure in the weightless transparent object. They formed indescribable patterns and symbols that seemed to fuse knowledge, power, transformation, secrets, bizarreness, and madness within, making them no longer abstract.

This made Klein feel very dizzy. His mind was even on the verge of breaking down, with his soul almost losing control.

This is likely the true soul of the Spirit World Plunderer… I have the corresponding powder as well. There's about 70 grams, more than I needed. It's more than I expected. Klein nodded indiscernibly and stored the powder

into a box. Together with the true soul body, he threw them on the junk pile and covered it with the gray fog.

After completing this, he raised his hand to rub his temples and made a self-deprecating remark:

If it wasn't for the Sea God Scepter, I probably would've had to leave Calderón City due to the assault of the Spirit World Plunderer. I would then wait until I had helpers and could make the most solid of hunting plans so as to control the stirrings of the area to not alarm the unknown entity at the core region…

Sigh, I was rash the entire time. Although the outcome was fine, it really doesn't suit my character. It's also completely at odds with the Seer pathway's acting. In the future, I should try to avoid using the Sea God Scepter in the outside world.

Uh… The Spirit World Plunderer has been successfully hunted. There's no need for me to get Miss Sharron's help. In a few days, I'll write to her so that she won't be thinking over this matter.

However, I have a premonition that I'll still be heading to Calderón City in the future. When that happens, perhaps I might still need Miss Sharron's help.

In addition, I have to seek out information on Bizarro Banes. I can't put all my hope on the City of Silver…

Amidst his thoughts, Klein directly returned to his body, without bringing his marionettes. He ended the ritual and headed straight for bed, falling asleep the moment his head hit the pillow.

"Escaped?" Soest looked at the man opposite him and asked Daly Simone who was carrying out a spirit channeling

They had just finished their operation and had captured a few Numinous Episcopate members. However, the key personnel the intel pointed at, Hand of White Palenque Taciblius, wasn't at the secret gathering point.

He was a Sequence 4 demigod; therefore, not only had the Red Gloves team used a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, they had even requested Goddess's Eye Ilya's help. However, it was all futile.

Daly Simone nodded.

"Yes."

She then looked at the captive, suddenly speaking with an ethereal voice, "Where did Palenque Taciblius go?"

"H-he said he was going to meet someone," the Numinous Episcopate member answered slowly.

"Who is that person?" Daly Simone pressed. Leonard Mitchell and company also cast their gazes over.

The man who was being spirit channeled answered with an unperturbed voice, "Ince Zangwill."

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CHAPTER 930
FORMER ORGANIZATION

“Ince Zangwill.”

Upon hearing the name, all the Red Gloves present fell silent. Not a single one spoke for a moment.

Ever since this former bishop betrayed and fled the Church, the Church of Evernight had never relaxed its pursuit of him. Archbishops and high-ranking deacons who took up high posts had taken turns being responsible for searching for him. They helped each other, often bringing the relevant Sealed Artifacts everywhere to search for clues about him. But ultimately, they were unable to lock onto Ince Zangwill. He slipped away as a result of all kinds of coincidences, his shadow wasn’t even noticed. Furthermore, he had caused several major events that killed many Nighthawks.

To the Church of Evernight, especially the Nighthawks, he was someone they hated that had also insulted them!

Without realizing it, Leonard Mitchell had already clenched his hanging fists as his breathing grew deeper.

He soon forced himself to extricate himself from the sudden emotions that emerged within him. He turned his attention to something else.

It was no wonder Dwayne Dantès was able to meet Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea. It was because the latter’s goal was also the Southern Continent—East Balam!

Amidst everyone's silence, Daly Simone immediately used her Spirit Body to emit an ethereal voice without any obvious changes. With some coldness, she spoke at a quickened pace:

"Where are they meeting?"

The Numinous Episcopate member shook his head blankly.

"I don't know."

Daly raised a few more questions, but she didn't get an ideal reply.

Finally, she took a step back and cast her eyes at the Red Gloves team captain, Soest.

Soest sighed and deliberated over his words before saying, "First, we need to inform this piece of intel to Her Excellency, Goddess's Eye. We shall leave it to her to contact the Holy Cathedral. Ince, who has 0-08 with him, isn't someone a Red Gloves team can handle.

"Second, we should continue investigating and follow this clue pertaining to Palenque Taciblius. Let's hope that we can figure out Ince Zangwill's motives. With the situation of us not being able to track him or lock onto him, grasping his motives is more important than knowing where he is. Perhaps, it can help us set up a trap that he has no choice but to step into.

"Finally, from now on, everyone is to take note of any coincidences. Regardless of the reason, they are to be reported to me!"

"Yes, Captain!" the Red Glove members replied in unison. Leonard maintained his silence as he turned his head to glance at Daly Simone. He found that this Gatekeeper who addressed herself as a Spirit Medium was similarly silent. Her gaze was dark.

At the same time, he heard Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice resound in his mind:

“Heh heh, from the looks of it, I’ll be witnessing a play of running and pursuing.”

What does Old Man mean? Is he hinting at something? We just decided to start investigations on Ince Zangwill’s motives, and it’s already known by 0-08? Leonard looked away and suddenly had an idea.

If a person who is already dead was to secretly do the relevant investigation, would he be able to avoid 0-08’s notice?

After two hours of sleep, Klein rubbed his still throbbing head and slowly got out of bed.

Following that, he pulled the bell by the side of the door and waited for an attendant to arrive.

Before long, a native deliberately dressed in Loen attire—a white shirt and red vest-knocked on the door.

Klein twisted the handle and opened a tiny gap in the door. He instructed with a hoarse voice, “Send another lunch set to the room. I had my meal too early.”

At that instant, he already looked like the tanned Enzo. As a gentleman living in a luxurious room with two servants, it was impossible for him to personally instruct the attendant at the door.

“Yes sir, a lunch set. Any special requests?” The native attendant took out some paper and a pen and began recording as he asked with a rather strange Loenese accent.

Klein used an equally odd Loenese accent.

“With braised meat as the main dish, match it with a cup of sparkling wine with ice and lemon.”

“Do I include two servant meals?” the native attendant asked, following the usual procedure.

Klein was silent for two seconds before saying, “Yes.”

After ending the conversation, he closed the door and quickly set up a ritual, bringing back Enzo and Ludwell from above the gray fog to the real world. As for Creeping Hunger and Word of the Sea, he temporarily left them in the junk pile. One of them was starving, and the other could hardly resist the urge to sing.

After Klein controlled the marionettes to clean up his room, a few attendants came to deliver lunch. Soon, the entire room was filled with the sounds of cutlery hitting the plate and a soft chewing sound.

After some time, Klein put down his cutlery, picked up his napkin, and wiped his mouth. In satisfaction, he leaned backward and shook his head helplessly.

“If this continues, I’ll really become fat…”

The two marionettes had already lost the ability to eat, but to conceal that fact, Klein had no choice but to add servant meals. With him unwilling to see food go to waste, he could only try to eat as much as he

could.

“…Thankfully I’m a Faceless.” Klein covered his mouth as he burped before drinking the last bit of sparkling wine.

Only at this moment did he feel like he had recovered. He now had the energy to consider the various details of his trip to Calderón City.

The Marauder pathway is truly terrifying. Just a charm created from a Worm of Time is able to achieve such incredulous effects. As a King of Angels, it’s obvious how terrifying Blasphemer Amon is. Even an avatar

isn’t easy to deal with… Thankfully, I didn’t put on a brave front. I knew to mimic those with experience and directly fled to the Southern Continent…

The True Creator places a great importance on me. “He” directly got Tail Devourer Ouroboros to rush over…

This does have a feeling of traveling across time. The angels on ancient murals are just walking out and standing before me. Thankfully, I was still able to directly end the summoning.

Just as Klein thought of this, his expression sank as he discovered a serious problem:

Ouroboros is a King of Angels from the Monster pathway!

This also meant that “He” could directly see the uniqueness about him. “He” could see the grayish-white fog and see the illusory door formed of spherical lights and the transparent and translucent maggots that formed the spherical lights!

What does this actually imply? The Angel of Fate who has survived since the Second Epoch should know something. And the True Creator probably knows more… Could “They” be able to tell that I’m the master of the mysterious space above the gray fog? Regardless, the importance “They” place on me will rise! Klein clenched his right fist and put it to

Order or Rose Redemption might take.

He felt lucky that, be it Rose Redemption or the Aurora Order, they had yet to lock onto any of The Fool’s believers.

However, during the chaotic battle outside Bayam, when he was still active as Gehrman Sparrow, he had thrown out the Tinder glove, which had been corrupted by the True Creator, to attempt to attract a saint from the Aurora Order. This might very well have led to the crazy adventurer to enter the suspect list.

From the clues extending outward from Gehrman Sparrow, there's Admiral of Stars, Vice Admiral Iceberg, Danitz, and Anderson. All of them will be investigated by the Aurora Order. I have to warn them. Klein slowly exhaled and stood up, prepared to head above the gray fog.

From his point of view, the pursuit of Gehrman Sparrow by the military, Church of Storms, Rose School of Thought, and Numinous Episcopate were all different. The True Creator's believers were rather crazy and had a King of Angels, a leader who was good at prying into the secrets of fate, active in the real world. This way, it didn't matter if Cattleya and company were at sea, making it difficult to be locked on. There was still the risk of them being found.

Among them, Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina and the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter Anderson weren't people Klein was worried too much about. They knew little, nothing that pointed towards the core problem. Nothing much would happen aside from the need to consider whether the bunch of lunatics of the Aurora Order would employ extreme methods in the interrogation process.

West Balam, Northern State. In the Cookawa City ruled by Maysanchez. Danitz, who was chewing on roasted meat, paused suddenly. He heard Mr. Fool pass him the warning from Gehrman Sparrow.

"Be careful of the Numinous Episcopate. Be careful of the Aurora Order, especially the latter. Pay special attention. Also, warn Anderson Hood as well as Edwina Edwards."

Be careful of the Numinous Episcopate… Be careful of the Aurora Order… How many has it been… The military, Church of Storms, Church of Evernight, Rose School of Thought… What did Gehrman Sparrow do? Why has he offended so many factions? Dogsh*t! Danitz's expression froze before grimacing.

He had no idea that the strongest person of the seven pirate admirals had changed.

Opposite him, Anderson put down the knife he used to slice meat, pricked up his brows, and curiously asked, “Have you recalled something?”

Danitz secretly took a deep breath and asked after some deliberation, “Have you heard of the Aurora Order?”

He wasn’t sure if Anderson knew. After all, the Aurora Order was a rather secretive organization in the beginning. Its reputation was later build up in the Loen Kingdom.

Anderson chuckled.

“I’m actually more surprised that you know of them. Did your captain tell you?”

Without waiting for Danitz to answer, he combed his short hair with his finger and continued, “They believe that the Creator is omnipresent. Everything has godhood. They believe that life is nothing but a spiritual journey. As long as one is willing to listen to their preachings, understand, discover, and gather the godhood, they will eventually become angels to transcend reality.

“Such an idea doesn’t sound bad, but that’s not the main point. The main point is that they believe in the True Creator…”

Upon hearing that, Danitz couldn’t help but jeer:

“You know quite a bit, just slightly less than I know.”

Anderson immediately curled the ends of his mouth and said with a beaming smile, “Of course.

“I once joined an organization in Intis. They hoped to change society, the world, to make the supernatural no longer secret and to be out in the open for everyone to see, so as to become true rulers.

“They’re called the Iron and Blood Cross Order, and they also believe in the True Creator.”

Danitz’s expression froze as cold sweat oozed out of his forehead.

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CHAPTER 931
NEW METHOD TO ACQUIRING INTEL

Glancing at Danitz's expression, Anderson continued as though he didn't notice a thing.

"However, their brains appear to have been eaten by zombies. They were fervent to the point of stupidity. They didn't adhere to my sense of aesthetics. So after cheating them of their things, I quit.

"Eh, why's your face a little pale. You're even sweating. Did you get heatstroke? As a hunter, shouldn't adapting to the environment be an intrinsic ability?"

Danitz lifted his right hand and wiped his sweat. Cursing inwardly, he forced a smile and said, "I've heard that once someone believes in an evil god, it's almost impossible to escape the faith."

As he spoke, he raised his chin slightly, wearing a look as though he was musing over the circumstances of his future death. It didn't cross his mind that Gehrman Sparrow had just offended the Aurora Order and was being targeted by the True Creator's believers. He also didn't make the connection that he was believing in a suspected evil god, The Fool.

"Well said," Anderson replied with a smile that didn't have the slightest hint of gloom. "It's not like I have any true faith. Back then, the incantations I said were lines I modified from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. Since they don't really enjoy using their brains, no—they don't even have that. As

long as you superficially appear devout, any random excuse can be used to fool them."

Without waiting for Danitz to develop the discussion further, he asked, "Why are you suddenly asking about the Aurora Order?"

Danitz bit down on his roasted meat and slowly chewed and swallowed. After a deliberate pause of twenty to thirty seconds, he said, "I just recalled something. For some reason, Gehrman Sparrow has been identified by the Aurora Order as a high-priority elimination target. Oh right, there's also the Numinous Episcopate. And both you and me are known to have relations with him."

"You want me to be careful against the Aurora Order and the Numinous Episcopate?" Anderson nodded in enlightenment as he chuckled. "You've recently mentioned something similar. Rose School of Thought, Church of Storms, Loen military… Man, at times, I even feel that Gehrman Sparrow is more suited to being a hunter than me."

Danitz could hardly retort as he nodded heavily in agreement.

Anderson thought for a moment when he suddenly changed topics out of the blue:

"What do you plan on doing here in West Balam? Helping Gehrman Sparrow with something?"

Upon hearing this question, Danitz fell silent for a second. He put down the item in his hand and tidied his clothes in an unhurried manner.

"Investigate the faith of the different classes of West Balam."

This was determined after his discussion with Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina. In common parlance, it meant: Investigating the developments of the various secret organizations and factions in West Balam.

Of course, this included some preliminary contact with the local ruling forces, and to figure out if they had any desire to purchase firearms.

“Investigate the faith of the different classes of West Balam…” Anderson repeated Danitz’s words as he reflectively raised his right hand to rub his temples as though he had a headache.

After the end of the Tarot Gathering, and warning Admiral of Stars to take note of the Aurora Order’s and Numinous Episcopate’s “investigations,” with the best choice being seeking the Moses Ascetic Order’s help, Klein busily finished the three-party transaction between The World, The Moon, and The Sun. He received 5,000 pounds in return.

After dinner, he bit on an unlit disguised smoke pipe as he read the papers. Then, he saw Miss Messenger walk out of the void to deliver him a letter.

Leonard’s… Klein reached out to receive it and noticed that Reinette Tinekerr didn’t stay at all. She had rapidly returned to the spirit world.

This also made him determine that Leonard Mitchell had already paid the mailing fee; hence, he took out his other hand and unfolded the letter.

“Ince Zangwill has appeared in East Balam. He’s suspected to have met with Palenque Taciblius from the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction…”

Ince Zangwill… Klein ruminated over the name as he slowly leaned back into his reclining chair.

In the letter, Leonard wished that he could do some investigations in secret to figure out Ince Zangwill’s motives.

But the problem is that 0-08 has the characteristic of “any mention of it will be known.” Knowing of it also means being known by it. Besides, it’s good at arranging coincidences, making people follow its directions without even realizing it… Under such circumstances, it’s very difficult to avoid 0-08’s

notice while investigating Ince Zangwill. Not only is there no chance of success, it's also easy to expose myself… As Klein thought, he made Enzo walk behind him and begin massaging his shoulder.

He read Leonard Mitchell's letter again, hoping to find more clues and incisive points for investigations from those few words.

East Balam… Numinous Episcopate… Artificial Death… Palenque Taciblius… Why is Ince Zangwill looking for them for? Trying to find allies for the true mastermind behind the Great Smog of Backlund, that royal family's faction?

Artificial Death… Artificial Death…

As Klein thought, he suddenly recalled that there was a matter that no one knew other than himself and Mr. Azik.

The Evernight Goddess had preliminary gained control of the Death pathway's Uniqueness—in other words, Artificial Death. Presently, "She" was usurping, digesting, and wielding the corresponding authority!

In other words, the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction's target of belief was, in a way, the Evernight Goddess. After the authority was fully transferred and seized, they were bound to suffer a purge before slowly merging with the Church of Evernight. Or they might continue their work, making contact with the other Numinous Episcopate factions and other secret factions while unnoticeably cooperating with the Nighthawks.

To Klein, this wasn't anything of importance. What was important was, that in an ancient text he found before, it mentioned:

To artificially create Death, a number of Numinous Episcopate members had to pray to the Uniqueness daily, as though it was a true deity. It was an attempt to slowly awaken its sentience and allow it to come to life.

Of course, this was only one part of the overall plan which wasn't critical.

Then, could it be possible that when Palenque Taciblius prayed to Artificial Death, he had mentioned Ince Zangwill's motives and had sought blessings?

But he will probably never imagine that Artificial Death has already been controlled by the Evernight Goddess. Although it hasn't become part of "Her" manifestation, it has already lost its "freedom."

From this angle, directly setting up a ritual to pray to the Goddess might allow one to obtain Ince Zangwill's motives… That's quite possible! The more Klein thought about it, the more certain he was that his seemingly ridiculous plan would succeed.

And as for the reason why this could become a reality:

It was because the enemy's "leader" was their "spy"!

After getting Enzo to stop massaging him, Klein slowly got up and paced about, considering if he should make the attempt, and if so, how.

Ince Zangwill is a traitor of the Church. He's an insult to all Nighthawks. If there's a chance to wipe him out, the Goddess should be very willing to see it happen. "She" wouldn't mind providing some help…

But the Goddess is now in a critical stage of seizing the Artificial Death's authority. "She" will not be able to provide answers for a long period of time, and "She" can only provide feedback to normal ritualistic magic. Besides, I also lack the corresponding materials…

Also, I've been constantly warning myself to be on guard. I must not fully trust and rely on the Goddess… On second thoughts, directly praying to "Her" to obtain a revelation might not be too good. I hope to maintain a safe distance… Amidst his thoughts, Klein felt a little hesitant.

He began letting his thoughts wander in a bid to find a more acceptable plan.

Suddenly, he had a more ridiculous idea.

Directly pray to Artificial Death!

This actually posed no danger. This was because Artificial Death wasn't able to respond to prayers and rituals. If there was any feedback, it meant that it was essentially controlled by the Evernight Goddess. On the other hand, Klein had the feather produced and left behind from the Artificial Death Project. He also had Azik's copper whistle. He didn't need to spend too much time to gather the ingredients needed to set up a ritual for a revelation!

In addition, there's a layer in between us. I'm not directly contacting the Goddess. Perhaps, this might even help "Her" further seize Artificial Death's authority. Klein consoled himself as he began busying himself.

He first used the sacrificial and bestowment ritual. He brought back the two remaining feathers and some Full Moon Essence Oil, night vanilla powder, and other items which he had not used in a while to the real world. Then, he modified the sacrificial altar and completed the first part of the preparations. After all, he was essentially praying to the Evernight Goddess, he couldn't be bothered to head out to buy ritualistic materials of the Death domain.

This was essentially the same as other normal ritualistic magic. With great familiarity, Klein lit the candles, dripped some essential oils, and drew the symbols for "human" and "concealment" on an artificial goatskin. Then, in the thin fog that spread, he pressed Azik's copper whistle over it.

Immediately after that, he placed the white feather stained with pale yellow oil stains inside the silver bowl that had burning herbal powder. He then watched it curl without any signs of it turning black.

After exhaling silently, Klein took a step back and chanted in Hermes:

"You are the essence of death;

“You are the lord of the dead;

“You are the final home to all living beings.

“I pray for your help; I pray for you to tell me the motives for Ince Zangwill’s contact with the Numinous Episcopate.

II

II

Just as he said those words, the three candlelight burgeoned as though they brightened significantly but were tainted with a dark green. The surroundings turned cold and creepy.

Klein closed his eyes and entered Cogitation for thirty seconds, feeling uneasy. He walked in front of the altar, picked up the Full Moon Essence Oil and dripped one drop onto each of the three candles.

After doing this, he took away Azik’s copper whistle, grabbed the artificial goatskin, and moved it close to the candlelight representing “himself.” When it ignited, he threw it into the silver bowl.

With a whoosh, the white feather which didn’t show any signs of damage soared with pale-white flames, covering the entire silver bowl and obstructing Klein’s vision.

About three seconds later, the fire subsided, leaving a mound of powder in the silver bowl.

The powder moved without the help of any wind, forming one word after another:

“Possessed by an evil spirit. Requires exorcism.”

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CHAPTER 932
THIN-SKINNED

…The Goddess really replied… Upon seeing the words formed by the powder, Klein's first reaction had nothing to do with the content. Instead, he was shocked that this seemingly ridiculous thing had happened.

Although he was already mentally prepared and had believed that the chance of success was rather high, he still felt conflicting emotions. It took him almost a minute to accept it.

After a while, Klein exhaled slowly, raised his right hand, and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise manner.

"Praise the Lady!"

He then ended the ritual, forcing himself to focus his attention on the revelation itself.

Possessed by an evil spirit. Requires exorcism?

Ince Zangwill actually got possessed by an evil spirit? He had gone from Sequence 9 to Sequence 5 of the Death pathway. The godhood he obtained at the critical stage is also Sequence 4 Nightwatcher of the Evernight pathway, one that is good at dealing with Spirit Body-type creatures. Evil spirits and wraiths should be afraid of him, so why would he end up being possessed?

That's unless the evil spirit's level is extremely high or, at its core, is very special.

Unfortunately, I've only met one evil spirit in the truest sense of the word. It's that ancient evil spirit sealed in the underground ruins of Alista Tudor. I know little about such monsters, so it's difficult for me to grasp the details. Hmm, I can write to ask Miss Sharron. I can also get Little Sun to find out more. That Shepherd Elder Lovia had Grazed an evil spirit…

It's no wonder Ince Zangwill is trying to meet a demigod of the Numinous Episcopate. When it comes to exorcising evil spirits, aside from the Church of Evernight and Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the best would probably be the Numinous Episcopate. Uh, there's probably the Church of the God of Combat as well. Neighboring pathways often have similar traits.

There's also one point that can be gleaned from this. Ince Zangwill doesn't wish for his possessed state to be known by the royal family faction and the Demoness Sect who are in cahoots with him. Otherwise, there's no need for him to come all the way to the Southern Continent! The two factions existed before the Fifth Epoch, and they have a long legacy. It's quite unlikely that they don't have a Sealed Artifact that can remove or exorcise evil spirits. Even if they can't find one, getting the Demoness Sect to contact the Numinous Episcopate is definitely safer and more covert than getting Ince Zangwill to make the trip himself…

As his thoughts raced, Klein unfolded a piece of paper and wrote:

"The intel you have provided me made me connect certain clues from what I've previously gathered. And due to a particular great existence's help, this points to a clear conclusion:

"Ince Zangwill is possessed by an evil spirit, and he's seeking the Numinous Episcopate's help.

"Just based on this fact alone, we can make several useful judgments:

"Ince Zangwill will often manifest inconsistency in his words and actions. He will often deviate from his normal path, doing something we feel that is absolutely impossible for him to do, and to make mistakes we find

incomprehensible. Before this problem is resolved, he will not stop having contact with the Numinous Episcopate. It might even become more frequent…

“Making investigations based on this might allow us to catch Ince Zangwill by the tail. However, I believe we still wouldn’t be able to lock onto him. The creation of coincidences from that Grade o Sealed Artifact is insurmountable.”

Upon writing this, Klein couldn’t help but recall his direct encounter with Ince Zangwill.

His own investigations didn’t directly point to him, but it caused their ploy to nearly fail. Hence, Ince Zangwill personally took action, sending a meteor falling from the sky in an attempt to kill Sherlock Moriarty so as to obliterate any clues. And he ultimately received Mr. Azik’s help and escaped the dire situation, forcing Ince Zangwill to step into the limelight and expose himself.

Back then, if Mr. Azik had recovered to his former strength, Ince Zangwill might already be dead… But to replicate such a situation and force him to appear before me is still extremely difficult. After all, back then, not only was there Mr. Azik, a Death Consul, and my use of the gray fog to foil the coincidences, there was also Trissy Cheek and the ring which was suspected to be a Grade o Sealed Artifact. Without her suddenly escaping, Ince Zangwill wouldn’t have been forced to personally take action… Klein deliberated as he wrote:

“If we can figure out the origins and primary goals of the evil spirit, there might be a chance of the situation having a favorable change…”

After writing the matters regarding Ince Zangwill, Klein’s heart stirred. Just as he was about to mention something else, he stopped his pen after writing the first few letters. He raised his left hand and pinched his cheeks. He appeared to be in a serious dilemma and seemed a little embarrassed.

After muttering silently a few times, Klein finally smoothly wrote the rest:

“Even without that Grade o Sealed Artifact’s help, Ince Zangwill is an enemy you and I are unable to face head-on. We need to make plenty of preparations.

“If you can provide me with some Worms of Time, I can use them to create high-level charms that can deal with demigods. It’s called a ‘Fate Siphon’ charm. It can swap the fates of yourself and the target for a short period of time.”

Putting down his fountain pen, Klein didn’t take a second look as he quickly folded the letter and seriously sealed it in an envelope.

He then took out the adventurer’s harmonica and a gold coin before summoning Miss Messenger. He got her to take away the reply letter to Leonard Mitchell, but this time, it wasn’t addressed to 7 Pinster Street. Instead, it was directly sent to Leonard’s present address. With Leonard having just written the letter, Klein didn’t believe that he had moved out of Reinette Tinekerr’s detection range.

After doing all of this, Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he shook his head slightly.

Requesting the help of others is really a difficult task. It’s even more so for someone as thin-skinned as me.

He quickly retracted his attention and once again modified Enzo’s and Ludwell’s appearances. After all, they had been seen by Angel of Fate Ouroboros during their exploration of Calderón City.

During this process, Klein suddenly had an idea. He planned on “sending’ them above the gray fog and using the Spirit World Plunderer’s true soul body for a disguise!

The Spirit World Plunderer could make its soul avatars take the form of its true soul body, and it could also get them to disguise themselves as other spirit world creatures. The Beyonder ingredient it left behind must've had such abilities. However, it would be difficult to use it with the poor effects and the huge negative side effects!

However, this wasn't a problem for Klein who possessed the mysterious space above the gray fog. After all, he didn't plan on using the Beyonder ingredient for actual combat. Doing some changes to his marionette didn't require too many smooth operations and great effects. Furthermore, this could be slowly adjusted. As for the negative effects that came from the godhood, it wasn't something to consider. Who wasn't obedient when left in the junk pile?

After a series of tasks, Klein sat at the high-back chair of The Fool. In his hand was the palm-sized Spirit World Plunderer's true soul body. Without looking down to look at it in detail, he extended his spirituality bit by bit into it.

There wasn't much changes to the scene before him. It was still the illusory and dense black Spirit Body Threads. However, when he tried controlling them, he discovered that not only could he control the marionettes' Spirit Body Threads, but he could also let his Spirit Body Threads extend out and penetrate into their bodies.

When both sides established such a two-way connection, Klein suddenly felt that he and his marionette was one. All his Beyonder powers could be enacted on the other party through the Spirit Body Threads, including his trick for changing his appearance and body!

Amidst a slow and difficult process, Klein felt rather groggy as he felt his emotions turned into a mess. He began showing signs of losing control. This was an inevitable outcome from having his spirituality make direct contact with godhood.

He hurriedly diverted some attention to stir some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, and he restored his condition back to its normal state.

After enduring the torment, Klein finished his attempt. Enzo had transformed into a Southern Continent native that looked like he came from a plantation. Ludwell had a mixed-blood feel to him. His ghastly face was no longer more bone than flesh. Instead, there was a plumpness to it. As for the silver mask that had the effect of placating the soul, there was no way of removing it for the time being. All Klein could do was let it stick to Ludwell's chest. This still had a certain level of effect, but it was inferior to wearing it on his face. It could barely maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, there's no way to change this mask into other types of accessories. Otherwise, it would save me quite a bit of trouble. As Klein rushed to throw the Spirit World Plunderer's true soul body back onto the junk pile, he rubbed his temples and allowed his thoughts to wander. Right, I still have a Soul Assurer Beyonder characteristic here that can be made into a mystical item to replace that mask… No, I've always planned on returning it to the Church. I'll mail it to him when Leonard replies.

After the discomfort slowly subsided, Klein took out his golden pocket watch and opened it to check the time.

Following that, he summoned a paper figurine and stirred some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. He then threw both into a specially labeled point of light.

It was the point of light representing The Fool's only believer at present—Danitz!

From Klein's point of view, Admiral of Stars Cattleya had the Moses Ascetic Order backing her. Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina was from the Church of Knowledge and Wisdom. Anderson Hood didn't know much about Gehrman Sparrow, and being good at identifying the situation he was in, he wasn't one to put on a brave front. Therefore, when the Aurora Order

did an “investigation,” it was unlikely that they would be in grave danger. Danitz was the only exception. With him in West Balam and not able to return to the Golden Dream anytime soon, his lacking strength, and him often wearing the boxing glove that made him act rashly, it was truly worrisome.

Due to this fact, Mr. Fool had to work a little harder. He gave Danitz a Paper Angel’s embrace every day at a fixed time, so as to disrupt any divination or prophecies about him.

Leonard never expected Klein Moretti to reply that quickly. With some level of incredulity, he opened the envelope and read the corresponding content.

“Due to a particular great existence’s help… Is he referring to The Fool?

“Indeed, Klein’s investigations into Ince Zangwill has already reached a significant depth. He has already figured out the truth the moment I mentioned the Numinous Episcopate…

“Possessed by an evil spirit? How did he end up being possessed by an evil spirit?

“How do we make use of it?

“Worms of Time… This…” Leonard quickly scanned through the last part of the letter as his expression suddenly became complicated.

In his mind, Pallez Zoroast maintained his silence without saying a word.

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CHAPTER 933
EVIL SPIRITS' COMMON TRAIT

After a while, Leonard cleared his throat and wore a smile without realizing it. He said with a suppressed voice, “Old Man, Klein’s… This suggestion seems pretty good. It’s very… very viable. The effects should be quite substantial. Why don’t you consider it?

“Didn’t you mention that you would do your best to help me exact revenge?

“Haha, I thought Worms of Time could only be used for avatars and act as support…”

He subconsciously droned on while Pallez Zoroast remained silent the entire time. Only after a while did he sigh lightly and say, “I can only give you a maximum of two Worms of Time.”

Without waiting for Leonard to say a word, he added, “To exact revenge on a demigod who wields a Grade o Sealed Artifact, the most important thing is still your own level and strength. Otherwise, you won’t have a chance of using it even if you have a high-level charm.”

Leonard wiped away his smile and nodded seriously.

“I’ll do my best digesting my potion.

“If you finish digesting it and fail to accumulate enough contribution points, I’ll help you seek out the Beyonder ingredients needed for Spirit Warlock.”

As for only having two Worms of Time, he wasn't disappointed at all. It was already a bonus. Just getting one was a great boon. Having two meant that he and Klein could split it, each of them having one Fate Siphon charm.

After expressing his attitude, he asked in puzzlement, "Old Man, do you think Klein has already used the previous Worm of Time as a charm?"

He remembered very clearly that, back when they were figuring out who Emlyn White was supporting, Old Man had parasitized Tinder with a Worm of Time. Later, it lost contact and failed to be of any use. Now, on retrospection, just Emlyn White's and Sherlock Moriarty's close relationship made it easy for him to figure out the truth. The Worm of Time had been eliminated by the upper echelons of the secret organization or even The Fool "Himself." Furthermore, there was a high chance that it had been bestowed to Klein. Otherwise, his former colleague wouldn't have known of the existence of the Worm of Time.

Pallez Zoroast immediately scoffed.

"If he hasn't already used it and seen its effects, why would he raise the issue and ask for more?

"Alright. I need to separate the Worms of Time. This will make me fall asleep for at least two weeks. If you have any questions, find someone to answer them by yourself."

With that said, not giving Leonard a chance to raise further questions, "He" scattered his spirituality and created a blob of light that hung "high" inside Leonard's mind as though "He" didn't wish to speak.

Leonard's instinctive response was to chuckle dryly. He focused his attention back onto the letter from Klein Moretti as he carefully read it again.

Possessed by an evil spirit… The origins and primary goals of the evil spirit…

I don’t know much about evil spirits. Nothing comes to mind…

After a few minutes of thought, Leonard took out a matchbox and burned the letter. Then, he left the room which the local Nighthawks had assigned him at the last minute. He came to a room diagonally opposite his and knocked on the door.

Before long, Daly, who hadn’t removed her blue eyeshadow and blush, opened the door and pricked up her eyebrows.

“When did a Sleepless have the courage to knock on a lady’s door at a time highly associated with a bed?”

“Ahem. I have some questions I’d like to consult you about.” Leonard obviously didn’t dare respond to Daly’s comment as he immediately expressed the reason why he was here.

Daly sized him up and chuckled.

“I’m not responsible for counseling minors.”

As she spoke, she made way and allowed Leonard to enter her room.

Without daring to let his eyes wander, he casually pulled a round stool to sit on. He then went straight to the point:

“Ma’am, I’d like to know more about evil spirits.

“You’re a Sequence 5 of the Death pathway. You have higher clearance than me. You should know quite a lot.”

“Why are you asking me this?” Daly propped herself with her hands on the edge of the table behind her.

Without waiting for him to reply, she continued, “Most evil spirits are the result of dead High-Sequence Beyonders. A small number of them are

wraiths who break through various restrictions via using various opportunities.

“The first situation is more common. After High-Sequence Beyonders consume a potion to obtain godhood, their Soul Body would have experienced a mutation. It would be a mutation at their core. This allows their Soul Body to remain even in death or when their powers are dispersed. There will be a certain level of divinity to it, making them rather terrifying. The second situation isn’t different on a fundamental level.

“Normally speaking, evil spirits will weaken with the passage of time until they completely dissipate. However, they can also assimilate into the region where they were born, making the spirit world and even the Underworld fuse with it. They then extract power from this to maintain their existence.

“Therefore, many evil spirits have their own territory and active range. It’s not that they do not wish to leave, but they can’t. The only exception is when they accumulate sufficient power, allowing their existence to experience a fundamental change.”

Leonard habitually crossed his right leg over his left and pressed in thought, “Can evil spirits leave their territory by possessing a person?”

“Yes, but ordinary humans and most Beyonders are unable to withstand the extraction effect the evil spirits have on their bodies. They will quickly lose their spirituality and body temperature and be unable to last long.” As Daly spoke, she raised her hand to point at herself. “The best method is to rely on Beyonders of the Death pathway. Of course, it has to be at least a Sequence 5, because from Gatekeeper, we will have our own dead spirit prison in our bodies. It can be called a miniature Underworld. It can provide an evil spirit with an adequate environment for their existence. Once you become a Spirit Warlock, you will also have similar powers. However, it will be more about sealing and sleeping than an internal Underworld. Heh heh, those natural spirits and wraiths are truly troublesome when they come in and out.”

Ince Zangwill's Sequence 5 is Gatekeeper… It's no wonder that the evil spirit can possess him for long periods of time. Or could it be that he failed at an attempt to enslave an evil spirit? Leonard's thoughts opened up as he immediately made connections.

He deliberated for a few seconds before asking, "What sort of needs does an evil spirit have?"

"Needs? Singing? Dancing? Poetry? Men? Women? The Sea of Stars?" Daly returned with a question, amused.

Leonard realized that his usage of words was problematic as he awkwardly ruffled his hair.

"I mean, what desires will an evil spirit have?"

"That depends on what it desired while it was alive. Typically speaking, the remnant spirit will inherit the original obsessions, without being able to balance it rationally. If it were you, that evil spirit might attempt to write poems, imprison a group of spectators, and seek acknowledgment. Or it will do things in an ostentatious manner like the protagonist of a play," Daly joked. "However, regardless of what it was while it was alive, as long as one becomes an evil spirit, they commonly desire two things."

"What are they?" Leonard turned attentive.

Daly shot a glance at him and said, "First, it's to feed on the souls of living creatures. This can pleasure them, an innate pleasure that stems from the need to maintain their existence. In addition, a large number of souls will allow them to escape the restrictions of their territory and active range. It will replace the power provided by the spirit world and Underworld.

"Second, it's to seek out Beyonder ingredients from their pathway while they were alive. Through this, they could create another foundation. At a certain stage, the evil spirit would no longer need to draw on the powers of the spirit world and Underworld. They would no longer be restricted by

their territories or active range. In a sense, they would have transformed into a special spirit world creature."

Leonard seemed to realize something as he thought.

"This also means that evil spirits can consume Sequence potions?"

"No, Sequence potions are created for human consumption. They reduce the risk of losing control. To many supernatural creatures, there's no need to do so. They can directly consume the ingredient raw. It's especially so for evil spirits. Their obsession, cruelty, ferociousness, and penchant for souls make them half-crazy to begin with. There's no need to regulate it from other sources. Furthermore, they are Spirit Bodies, so the method of consumption is direct accommodation and slow digestion." Daly corrected Leonard's point.

This… To the evil spirit that possesses Ince Zangwill, whenever it has the upper hand, it will control the body to seek out Beyonder ingredients of its pathway while it was alive! Leonard was first surprised before he had an idea. He said in a pleasant surprise, "I understand. Thank you for answering my questions."

With that said, he hesitated for a few seconds and asked after some deliberation, "Ma'am, I believe we shouldn't just figure out the motives behind Ince Zangwill's meeting with the Numinous Episcopate demigod, but we also need to track his trajectory since Backlund to East Balam. We need to know what he did midway, what items he found. This might lead us to effective clues."

Daly suddenly fell silent before she pricked up her brows and said, "Well said.

"But what does this have to do with evil spirits?"

"…Nothing. I raised the question so as to make preparations because I believe that since we are investigating the Numinous Episcopate, we might

encounter evil spirits. The latter half was a suggestion I wished to make after the break. I just wished to talk to you about it beforehand." Leonard's mind raced as he slowed down his speech and fabricated an excuse on the spot.

Daly listened in silence and chuckled.

"If you actually work so hard to fabricate stories in front of other girls, you'll no longer be single with those looks of yours.

"Unfortunately, I'm not a clueless girl. Alright, there's no need to explain further. Leave."

Leonard stood up lamely without trying to emphasize his point. He then walked towards the door.

Just as he gripped the handle, Daly's slightly ethereal voice sounded behind him:

"I don't know what secret you're hiding, nor do I know what you know. None of that matters.

"But when it comes to Ince Zangwill, if you need any help or aid, you can find me."

Leonard paused for two seconds as his mouth quivered. He then pulled open the door and walked out.

City of Silver.

Derrick Berg had received the order to join an expedition team. Leading it was Chief Colin Iliad. Their target was Nois City. It was in a northern city's ruins where the Shapeshifter and other terrifying creatures lived!

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CHAPTER 934
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Ever since the information about the suspected Bizarro Bane-Shapeshifter-was given to Mr. World, Derrick constantly believed that the latter might one day entrust him with a mission for the corresponding ingredients. However, his strength was lacking. Even with his friends, it was impossible for him to complete the hunt. Furthermore, such expeditions needed to go through the six-member council. Private teams were unable to wander too far from the City of Silver. Therefore, all he could do was temporarily suppress it deep down. From time to time, it was used to motivate him to advance quicker.

To his surprise, it didn't take long before an expedition team headed for Nois City was set up. Leading the team was Chief Colin Iliad!

Combining his previous discussion with Mr. Hanged Man, Miss Justice, and company at the recent Tarot Gathering, Derrick quickly came up with a theory:

During the exploration of the former Chief's mausoleum, Mr. Fool had provided a certain level of help to the present Chief, allowing him to foil the Fallen Creator's ploy and successfully resolve certain matters. Hence, noticing his search for information, the Demon Hunter had decided to hunt a Shapeshifter to please the deity!

"This is a necessary way to curry favor, and is also a kind of equivalent exchange…" The Hanged Man's words resounded in Derrick's mind. It made him no longer puzzled over the matter. So, taking the opportunity before he set out, he prayed to Mr. Fool and requested "Him" to inform Mr. World of this expedition.

He quickly received a response and heard Mr. World say:

"…If the hunting of the Bizarro Bane is difficult or dangerous, the requirements can be lowered. Attempt to extract its blood.

"As long as you obtain it, I'll trade for it with the Priest of Light's Beyonder characteristic."

Priest of Light's Beyonder characteristics? Mr. World already has the Priest of Light Beyonder characteristic? Or could it be that he has locked onto a target and will quickly be able to obtain it? With the Chief's strength and the teamwork of the expedition team, there's a high chance of success if it's just extracting the blood… Derrick felt relieved as he held Thunder God's Roar and left his residence, heading straight for the training field.

Just as he arrived at his destination, he saw Chief Colin Iliad. The latter carried two swords on his back. He was tall and staid, leaving anyone who saw him at ease.

And beside this Demon Hunter was another person. She was wearing a black robe with purple patterns, and she had long, curly, silver-gray hair- Shepherd Lovia.

Lovia, who was apparently participating in this expedition, turned her head as her pale gray eyes reflected Derrick Berg's figure. However, there was only calm in her eyes.

Derrick felt a baffling sense of alarm as he involuntarily slowed down his pace.

East Balam, above the gray fog.

Klein deeply approved of the City of Silver's Chief's organization of an expedition to Nois City. He also informed Little Sun that there was no need to take risks. All he needed was some blood of the target for the completion of the mission.

When the time came, he could smear the blood over Groselle's Travels, bring all his gear, and challenge the Bizarro Bane on his turf; thus, obtaining the Beyonder ingredients he needed.

Klein had also considered the possibility of whether Groselle's Travels's ability to swallow people into the book's world was screened by the uniqueness of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. He had also come up with a solution. It was to bestow Little Sun with Groselle's Travels. After achieving the goal, he could get Little Sun to sacrifice it back.

In addition, he wasn't worried about the Bizarro Bane lacking blood because of its nature as a spirit world creature. This was because the Bizarro Sorcerer potion formula clearly wrote:

"Supplementary ingredients: 200 ml of a Bizarro Bane's blood…"

There are always more solutions than problems… Klein muttered in satisfaction before returning to the real world.

Before sleeping, he received a reply from Leonard Mitchell. It mentioned that it would take another day for the Worm of Time, and he described the monsters known as evil spirits in detail.

Another day before it can be provided. And there will be two of them. The grandpa in Leonard's body has quite a good attitude… Unable to leave the territory, limited in activity range… Their common trait is to devour the souls of living creatures and to desire Beyonder ingredients from their pathway from when they were still alive… This also means that the evil spirit will seek out the corresponding ingredients and Beyonder characteristics when it wields control over Ince Zangwill's body. This is indeed a direction for investigation. Klein held the letter as he read and thought.

Suddenly, he recalled something:

Back when he encountered Ince Zangwill on Waypoint Island in the Berserk Sea, the latter had been pursued by a powerful demigod from the Hunter pathway!

Could… Could it be a result of that evil spirit?

I previously imagined that Ince Zangwill had received a commission by some faction in the royal family, and did something that targeted the Intis Republic, only to have a mistake happen; thus exposing himself and getting pursued by their powerhouses…

From the looks of it, there might be another possibility… That evil spirit desires the Beyonder characteristics of the Hunter pathway, and when it could control Ince Zangwill's body, it attempted to hunt Beyonders of the same pathway. This might've succeeded or failed. In short, the result was that he was targeted by a powerful demigod from the Hunter pathway. He pursued him the entire journey with his intuition as a hunter. The more Klein thought about it, the more convinced he was that his theory was close to reality.

This was the only way to explain why Ince Zangwill, who wielded 0-08, was discovered!

At this moment, Enzo and Ludwell were kneeling down, massaging Klein's legs.

I can guess that it's an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway for now. I'll later write back to Leonard and get him to steer the investigations in this direction. Eh, this fellow's acting isn't that great, nor does he have the psychological experience. I wonder if he will end up exposing himself. Perhaps, he will explain it away with some nonexistent informant… Hunter pathway evil spirit. Hunter pathway evil spirit… Klein's eyes suddenly widened as he suddenly sat up, leaving his two marionettes at a loss.

There weren't many evil spirits he knew, and he had only seen one; however, that one happened to be from the Hunter pathway!

It was Red Angel Medici's main body that had combined with the remnant psyches of the two Sequence 1 angel from the Sauron and Einhorn families!

When it came to the Hunter pathway, there was no evil spirit that was of an even higher level. That was unless Blood Emperor Alista Tudor still had his psyche remaining.

Previously, Ince Zangwill was in Backlund. That evil spirit, who I'm not sure if I should call Medici, was also in Backlund.

Later, that evil spirit escaped the seal, and its whereabouts are unknown. As for Ince Zangwill, he suffered from the possession of an evil spirit.

Both sides are evil spirits from the Hunter pathway…

This… Could the one possessing Ince Zangwill be the Red Angel evil spirit? Klein frowned bit by bit, almost finding his theory unbelievable. However, he found it very possible!

As his thoughts raced, he found another indirect piece of evidence:

The unique trait of 0-08 is that once you know it, it will also know you. And as a King of Angels who survived from the Second Epoch, Red Angel Medici probably knows all kinds of details about 0-08!

In other words, as long as the evil spirit attempted to recall anything related to 0-08, 0-08 would know of it and establish a connection.

Right, there was that sentence: "Pleasure working with you"…No way… But the problem lies in the fact that I previously suspected that evil spirit to have one Sequence 1 characteristic. There's no need for it to seek any more of it. Could it be that it hasn't digested it? Klein rubbed his temples as his head ached. He stood up, entered his bathroom, and took four steps counterclockwise and headed above the gray fog.

Just as he sat down, he conjured a pen and paper and wrote the following divination statement:

“The one possessing Ince Zangwill is the evil spirit back in the underground ruins of Alista Tudor.”

He scrutinized each word for a few seconds before taking off the topaz pendant on his left wrist and planned to use spirit dowsing for the divination.

This time, the scene he saw when he opened his eyes

was:

The topaz pendant stood still.

This meant that the divination had failed.

The level is too high and there’s 0-08. Right, that evil spirit also carried the Red Priest card that has anti-divination and anti-prophecy properties. It’s no wonder I failed with the three combined… Hmm, this is also an indirect confirmation. Klein analyzed the reason and considered what other ways he could make a verification.

He tapped his finger on the edge of the long bronze table and silently muttered to himself, Apart from getting Leonard to lead the Red Gloves to do an investigation, I should do something as well…

Assuming that the one possessing Ince Zangwill is really the Red Angel evil spirit, where will it seek out Beyonder ingredients from the Hunter pathway when it gains control of the body?

Intis’s capital, Trier? Feysac capital, St. Millom? Or would it solely rely on the Card of Blasphemy’s activation and seal in order to use the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence to attract Beyonders to fly to it like moths flying to a fire?

Wait, it mentioned before that the descendants of the Medici family are in Bansy Harbor.

Although it has already been destroyed, there might still be something buried there!

Also, the evil spirit with the three angels' remnant spirit has very potent provocative traits. This matches Leonard's description of evil spirits in the letter. It might've deliberately left something in Bansy…

With this in mind, Klein immediately conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow's figure and requested The Hanged Man to head to Bansy once more to do a more thorough investigation.

After doing that, Klein began contemplating. Once he confirmed that Ince Zangwill had the Red Angel evil spirit in him, he wondered if he could use the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence as a starting point, enticing "Ince Zangwill" into the trap he set up using the corresponding ingredients.

Hunter pathway… Hunter pathway… Amidst his thoughts, Klein suddenly recalled two Hunters who were loitering in West Balam.

He frowned slightly and began analyzing.

Although East Balam and West Balam are vast territories, and the distance between the city that Ince Zangwill made his last appearance and the Northern State is very great, he will probably take nearly half a month to travel, even as a demigod since he doesn't have Teleport. In theory, Danitz and Anderson will not suddenly encounter the Red Angel evil spirit because of the law of convergence. Also, their Sequences are too low, but I can't be too sure…

West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa City.

Danitz shot a glance at Anderson and blurted out.

“I’m going to do some investigations. Why are you following me?

“Logically speaking, shouldn’t you head back to the Fog Sea at Behrens Harbor?”

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CHAPTER 935
"MEETING UP"

Anderson, who was enjoying a piece of cream cassava bread, looked up at Danitz. Seemingly in thought, he said, “I’m not sure why, but I don’t wish to leave West Balam. Haha. Since I’m here, as a treasure hunter, how can I return empty-handed?

“In the extensive forests, there are all sorts of abandoned temples that have gold, jewelry, antiques, and maybe mystical items. All of them are waiting for me to rescue them!”

Danitz tipped his chin and guzzled down the remaining Gwadar.

This was a beverage made from a fruit native to West Balam. It was orange-yellow in color with a sweetness amidst its sourness. It was good at quenching thirst and relieving heat. It also had some caffeine that allowed people to combat fatigue and stay awake.

Putting down the cup and picking up his napkin to wipe his mouth, Danitz scoffed.

“I keep feeling as though you’re up to something.”

“I also hope that’s the case,” Anderson said with an unconcerned smile.

He matched breakfast with coffee.

In East and West Balam, there were many excellent coffee-bearing lands. They were just slightly less famous than Feynapotter’s highlander coffee,

the Southern Continent's highlander coffee, and the Star Highlands and the nearby Paz Valley's Fermo coffee.

Without waiting for Danitz's reply, Anderson said with a smile, "Actually, isn't this good? I'm providing you with free protection, and you're my interpreter. Everyone benefits out of this arrangement."

Recalling that he was only a Sequence 7 and was wanted by all kinds of factions, Danitz had a baffling feeling that Anderson's words made sense.

He coughed slightly and said, "But there will be certain times when I'll get you to stay away."

"If you say 'please,' then there's no problem," Anderson said in a relaxed manner.

Danitz immediately hooded himself and walked towards the hotel's exit in preparation to begin today's investigations.

Midway, he suddenly said, "Have you had such an experience? Often dreaming of an angel's descent, wrapping you in its layered wings.

"No, it's not only a dream. I occasionally will have the same hallucination even when I'm awake."

Anderson glanced at the boxing glove Danitz was wearing. After pondering for a few seconds, he said with a smile, "Are you a believer of some secret existence?

"Or have you made contact with some ancient item?"

Danitz's expression froze as he forced a smile.

"If it were as simple as you said, I would've long guessed the reason!"

As he spoke, he brushed shoulders with the three men who came in before walking out.

Anderson habitually sized up the passersby to confirm his surroundings. Therefore, he glanced at the three men and realized that they were a master and two servants. The master was tall and his skin was brown. He had soft facial features, as though he had parents from Balam and Loen. He wore attire in the style of the Northern Continent-silk top hat, black formal suit, and a gold inlaid cane.

The two servants were standard locals that seemed to come from plantations. They were helping their master hold his cane and leather suitcase. One of them was a mixed-blood with a fleshy face and baggy clothes. On his waist was a rapier, as though he was also playing the role of a bodyguard.

Unconcerned, Anderson retracted his gaze and followed Danitz onto the street.

He pointed at the different-styled coffins that were horse-drawn or manually lifted with piqued interest.

“Want to try one of those?

“It’s very interesting. Once you get used to it, you will realize that death isn’t something to be afraid of. Perhaps you might be able to open the lid at some point in time and stand up again.”

Danitz looked at the strange transportation tool through the corner of his eyes as he didn’t hesitate to shake his head.

“As a pirate, I more or less believe in the Lord of Storms. Certain things are taboo, and one of them is to stay away from coffins.”

“I’m different. I don’t have any taboos.” Anderson casually took out a few Delexi and bought a few sets of newspapers from the paperboy on the

street.

It had to be said that when it came to paperboys, the various cities in the Southern Continent weren't inferior to the Northern Continent. After all, manual labor was cheaper, and there were many children who needed to supplement their family's income.

As Danitz walked to the end of the street in search of a carriage meant for foreigners, he took a copy of the newspapers from Anderson and quickly browsed through it.

Suddenly, he noticed a piece of news:

"…Infamous pirate who calls himself Admiral Hell, Ludwell, has been killed by the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow. His Black Tulip and entire crew has been taken over by Mirella who claims to be Death's Envoy…"

"This…" Danitz's mouth turned slightly agape, and he was hardly able to close it.

He finally understood why Gehrman Sparrow wanted him to be careful of the Numinous Episcopate!

This lunatic had actually killed the strongest of the seven pirate admirals, Ludwell!

About ten seconds later, Danitz handed the newspapers to Anderson with a dazed expression.

"Take a look at this."

Anderson received the newspaper with a smile and quickly scanned through it.

After a brief silence, he whistled and chuckled.

“That fellow likely has a new nickname:

“Pirate Admiral Nemesis!”

Danitz didn’t dare to nod as he poignantly said, “Back when I first met him, although I already found him terrifying, I never expected him to be this terrifying.”

At this moment, he recalled his early attempts of recruiting Gehrman Sparrow as a sailor of the Golden Dream.

And while they left the hotel, Klein had already taken up residence in a luxurious room. He was standing by the window, watching the two Hunters who were being flippant while walking.

Rubbing the cufflink on his sleeves, he unfolded the letter and wrote:

“…I suspect that the evil spirit that possesses Ince Zangwill is from the Hunter pathway. You can carry out more investigations in this regard.

“…Along with this letter is a Soul Assurer’s Beyonder characteristic. It comes from a pitiful person who was Grazed. I liberated him and promised to return his characteristic to the Church of Evernight.”

In East Balam, having just prepared to join the morning meeting, Leonard suddenly saw the angel messenger who wielded four blonde, red-eyed heads appear before him.

Already used to this, he received the letter and opened it and gave it a glance. He was surprised to see an item as resplendent as the night sky.

This is… Leonard had an inkling as to what the item was. He hurriedly unfolded the letter and read it.

Twenty seconds later, he slowly sighed and silently said, As expected, it’s a Beyonder characteristic.

Klein is still very friendly to the Church and the Nighthawks…

He was rather delighted as he took out two transparent dead, ringed worms and placed it in that envelope. He then summoned Gehrman Sparrow's messenger, handed it to her, and paid the one gold coin.

After doing this, Leonard loosened the top buttons of his shirt, walked out the room, and headed underground

On the way, he encountered Daly Simone.

Still dressed as a Spirit Medium, Daly looked forward and asked very normally, "Any new clues?"

"…It's suspected to be an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway." Leonard fell silent for two seconds before he decided against concealing the matter.

Daly nodded indiscernibly and said after some thought, "Then it might have the instinct of being provocative. It will proactively leave clues for us. Of course, this might also contain some level of misdirection to it."

Knock. Knock. Knock. Someone knocked at the captain's cabin of the Blue Avenger.

"Come on in," Alger put down the brass sextant in his hand and said in a deep voice.

A sailor opened the door and looked back. With the urging of his companions, he hesitantly entered the room and struck his left breast with his right fist and bowed.

"Holy Lord of Storms!"

After Alger did the same response, he forced a smile and said, "Captain, many pirates and sailors from merchant ships have been recently saying that

they found valuable items in the ruins of Bansy Harbor. There was even gold.

“We don’t have any particularly important missions recently, so everyone is wondering if we should make another trip to Bansy. Such a bustling harbor, even if it has been searched numerous times, it should still have plenty of things left…”

Alger listened with a deadpan expression. After a few seconds of thought, he said, “I can understand your feelings. Let’s do this. Let’s head in the direction of Bansy Harbor, but do not set a destination. If nothing happens midway, we will stay there for a day.”

“Aye-aye, Captain.” The sailor excitedly clenched his right fist and struck his left breast again. “May the Storm be with you…”

“May the Storm be with you…” Alger watched as his subordinate left and closed the door.

Then, as though nothing had happened, he poured himself a cup of Lanti Proof without any joy or anger as he sipped it slowly.

Whatever that had just happened was within his expectations. This was because the news of finding items of value in Bansy Harbor’s ruins was something he had spread while disguised.

As a captain of the Church of Storms, he was constantly monitored by his sailors. Having been to Bansy once, mentioning it again made it suspicious. Therefore, Alger decided on getting the crew to make the request themselves!

That way, even if they discovered anything or encountered something at Bansy Harbor, no one would suspect him, the Captain.

To the sailors, especially sailors who had just spent all their money in Bayam, any news or rumors with sufficient allure would stir their hearts the

most. Alger knew this very well.

In addition, the Blue Avenger had stayed in Bayam for too long. If he hadn’t set sail, it would also be suspicious.

As for monitoring Artisan Cielf, it was naturally left to The Hermit Cattleya. Due to the “investigations” of the Aurora Order, this pirate admiral and the Future had recently been hanging around the Rorsted Archipelago. It was said to be an important base of the Moses Ascetic Order.

After drinking the liquor, Alger put down his cup and looked out at the undulating waves and silently said a word:

“Bansy…”

Considering how it was late June, and will Auceptin’s birthday was still unclear, Klein did some reorganization before heading above the gray fog to bring the radio transceiver back to the real world. He also warned himself that he could only ask a maximum of two questions.

In the room that suddenly turned gloomy and cold, the unmanned transceiver began producing clicking voices.

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CHAPTER 936
DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT

Amidst the clacking sounds, a white piece of illusory paper spewed out from the radio transceiver. On it were words composed of Loenese:

“Exalted Great Master, your puny, loyal, and humble servant, Arrodes, is here to answer your summoning!

“Did you know? Dr. Aaron Ceres’s child was born the night before the last.”

Thankfully I contacted the magic mirror in time… Klein nodded slightly and said, “Now I know.”

Amidst clacking sounds, more of the illusory white paper spewed out:

“Based on the principle of reciprocity, it’s your turn to ask a question.”

Klein had originally wanted to ask about matters regarding Ince Zangwill, 0-08 and the Red Angel evil spirit, but considering how he had failed divining it above the gray fog, it was almost certain that Arrodes was unable to see it. At best, it could provide him more detailed information regarding 0-08, but this way, without the gray fog’s screening, it would be equivalent to him knowing of 0-08, and it would result in it knowing him. It didn’t benefit him when it came to hiding behind the scenes to direct a play.

After thinking for two seconds, he asked, “What means are there to speed up the digestion of potions?”

“Do a better job acting.” On the illusory white paper, black words were produced.

Upon seeing the magic mirror’s reply, Klein first fell silent before he slowly exhaled.

For the present him, Ince Zangwill’s appearance was too early!

He still needed about two months to completely digest the Marionettist potion. When that happened, and with him already gathering the ingredients, he could orchestrate an assassination of the demigod, Ince Zangwill, placing the Sequence advancement with his wish together. Then there was no need for him to consider any room for retreat. However, Ince Zangwill wouldn’t “appear,” until he was done preparing everything. He wouldn’t follow the steps that Klein had in mind.

Based on Klein’s earliest ideas, it was to first gather information, figure out where Ince Zangwill was, and wait until it was late August or early September before confirming the plan based on the situation. If not for the possession of the evil spirit, Ince Zangwill wouldn’t have exposed himself. If he didn’t use Ince Zangwill’s current condition, it was very possible that he couldn’t find the latter again once he exorcised the evil spirit. Coincidences would stand in his way when it came to meeting him.

Furthermore, if that were really the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein was also worried that Ince Zangwill might’ve already died by the time he and Leonard started exacting revenge. The reason behind his death could be due to certain machinations, or from some ridiculously comedic situations, and not because of his sins.

Due to these considerations, Klein attempted to digest his potion faster, hoping that he could complete it within a week or two. However, Arrodes’s answer left him depressed. He also knew that this wasn’t something he could force.

In two weeks, or even in the next few days, how was he to create a better opportunity to act?

In his silence, Klein had already made up his mind. He didn’t plan on tying the two matters together, and from the beginning, he wanted revenge against Ince Zangwill as his primary goal provided there was a chance of success.

He didn’t wish to miss this opportunity.

Although it had only been about ten months—less than a year-since the incident at the Blackthorn Security Company, it felt like a very, very long time, so long that he didn’t wish to wait any longer.

Catching a glance at the gloomy radio transceiver, Klein thought before wearing a stern look, he asked with a deep voice, “Back when I used the Winner marionette to look at myself, I learned why Beyonders of the Fate pathway will have such a reaction when facing me.

“Now, I would like to know what you see when you look at me?”

This question was a bolt out of the blue that seemed to echo in the room. The radio transceiver suddenly fell silent, and the clacking sounds sounded after quite a while.

A black illusory piece of paper spewed out, and on it were ghastly-white words:

“I-I see support and dominance from you.

“Are you satisfied with such a question?”

Support, dominance… What does that mean? Klein had planned on pressing on, but he believed that Arrodes was unlikely to explain it too clearly because it lacked the required knowledge.

Realizing that the Mother Tree of Desire was about to find him if he kept this up, he nodded and said, “Acceptable.

“That shall be all for today. You may return.”

The clacking of the radio transceiver became increasingly brisker as the paper that appeared was white again.

“Alright, Great Master, goodbye~ Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly at your service.”

This time, the magic mirror seemed to forget to add a hand-waving drawing.

That was quite a quick escape… Klein mumbled and immediately took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. He conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and informed The Hermit Cattleya that the Mythical Creature blood she needed was ready. She was to provide the means to regain a certain amount of strength during one’s weak stages as quickly as possible.

Before long, Cattleya set up a ritual and sacrificed an item to The Fool and requested this mighty existence to hand it to The World and tell him that the principle of the item’s effect was to temporarily borrow a portion of one’s strength from their former

self!

This sounds familiar… It sounds like the powers of the Seer pathway’s Sequence 3 Scholar of Yore… The Fool Klein was surprised as he picked up the item that Ma’am Hermit had sacrificed.

It was like the end of a cane with a long transparent gem embedded on it. It was carved with complicated, mysterious, indescribable, three-dimensional symbols and magic labels.

Klein recognized two of them. One was the incomplete Pupil-less Eye, and the other was the incomplete Contorted Lines.

Could this be an item that really points towards Sequence o The Fool? But isn’t it a little too complicated… This cane feels really familiar. It’s like… It’s like the crystal ball Little Sun had used when he prayed to me! C-could it also correspond to another crimson star? Klein looked out the ancient palace with an odd expression, but all he saw were illusory stars suspended in the infinite gray fog without any signs of abnormality.

With the fact that such items were one-use items like charms, he abandoned the idea of experimenting with it. All he could do was summon some paper from the junk pile and seriously record down the complicated and abnormal symbols and magic labels on the cane.

Loen Kingdom, Backlund, Dr. Aaron’s residence.

A maid was inside the master bedroom, taking care of a soundly-sleeping infant. Downstairs, the banquet which had many guests attending had reached the mid-way mark.

Suddenly, in a corner, three figures quickly materialized. Leading them was a man in a silk top hat, black formal suit. He was none other than Klein Moretti who hadn’t disguised himself.

He tossed out a charm and muttered an ancient Hermes term:

“Crimson!”

The dark red flames flashed, and amidst a light explosion sound, soothing powers emanated out. The maid fell asleep instantly, collapsing onto the bedside into a deep sleep.

Klein made his two marionettes stand in their spots as he walked to the infant’s cot and cast his gaze inside.

It was a child wrapped in silver silk. His skin was very fair, and he was fleshy with layer after layers.

This infant showed no fear towards the stranger as he looked straight at Klein with his eyes wide open while sucking his fingers.

“Ahem.” Klein couldn’t help but smile as he took off his hat and bowed. “Congratulations on being born.”

“You should say that to my parents!” The infant pulled out his fingers and spoke with a bright voice that didn’t match his age.

Klein chuckled and didn’t harp on this meaningless topic with the Snake of Fate. He went straight to the point.

“I brought the method that allows you to regain a certain amount of strength during your weak stages.

“You can now give me that drop of placenta blood.”

Will Auceptin opened up his fleshy palms and said, “Let me take a look first.”

“How do you know that the method is an item?” Klein couldn’t help but ask in puzzlement.

Will Auceptin scoffed.

“An intuition of fate.”

It’s like you didn’t say a thing… Klein moved the cane from behind him forward and handed it over.

The infant held it tightly and glanced at it twice before raising its voice:

“This can only be used once!”

“That’s right. Only once. Is that a problem?” Klein deliberated and said, “With your level and abilities, you can completely replicate the symbols

and magic labels engraved on it, and then prepare the corresponding ingredients to hold the correct ritual. Wouldn’t that allow you to use it multiple times?”

Will Auceptin suddenly cut him off.

“Alright, I accept it.

“Remember, you were the one who suggested it!”

Klein was momentarily a little dumbfounded, but he also seemed to realize something. He had a vague feeling that, despite him being here to take advantage of a baby, it ended up as the baby taking advantage of him.

“Yes, I was the one who suggested it.” He finally drew a breath and nodded earnestly.

The baby’s plump face revealed a smile as he spread open his other hand.

“I’ve already prepared it for you.

“A total of two drops. One drop is for the transaction, and the other drop is your commission for facilitating this transaction.”

There’s a commission? Klein was delighted as he hurriedly looked at Will Auceptin’s palm.

There were two drops of silver blood there. Each drop appeared to have countless, minute, aloof, illusory wheels spinning. They formed a belt that had its head connected to its tail.

Just one look at it made Klein seem to lose his ability to think. He felt all his thoughts repeatedly appearing in his mind.

He hurriedly shook his head and took out the iron cigar case which contained Azik’s copper whistle. He then placed the two drops of Snake of

Fate blood, which had clearly been sealed, inside.

“Thank you for your generosity,” Klein said sincerely before asking, “Can this be used to make a charm?”

The baby sucked his fingers and said, “Of course.

“As for the exact symbols needed to be carved, you have already seen those. You are free to choose a combination. Whatever you get will all depend on your luck.”

Klein nodded and asked again, “Who should I pray to?

“You’re probably unable to respond to relatively high-level rituals for the time being. And praying to Ouroboros is bordering on being a provocation…

“Do I pray to a Sequence 2 angel of the Fate pathway? But I don’t know ‘Their’ honorific names.”

Will Auceptin immediately grinned.

“There’s a more convenient method.”

“Who?” Klein pressed in delight.

The baby replied with a giggle, “Empress of Misfortune and Horror.”

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CHAPTER 937
SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Empress of Misfortune and Horror… Isn’t that the Goddess? That’s right, misfortune includes bad luck

-a part of fate. The Goddess has the corresponding authority and can naturally give a response… By giving this suggestion, doesn’t it mean that, in Will Auceptin’s eyes, “He” has always suspected that I’m Evernight’s Blessed, it’s just that I didn’t notice it myself. It’s the same as the answer I received about how I should get the High-Sequence Beyonder potion formula of the Seer pathway…”He” is even more certain after what happened at Saint Samuel Cathedral… Klein was first taken aback before he became enlightened.

As though he was muttering to himself, he said, “If I were to pray to the Goddess, no matter what symbols I choose, the final product’s effect will likely be inclined towards the domain of bad luck.”

“That’s common sense!” the baby wrapped in silver silk shouted.

After obtaining confirmation, Klein felt more certain as he said with a smile, “Eh… Are you still named Will Auceptin?”

He was very curious if “He” changed his name after being born.

“If you like it, you can continue thinking so. However, my full name has already been changed to Will Ceres,” the baby replied indifferently.

Klein thought before asking, “If I want to deal with the wielder of 0-08, what suggestions do you have?

“I don’t want to know about 0-08. I just wish to know if you have any suggestions.”

The plump baby looked at him as he suddenly opened his mouth and let out a loud cry.

“Waaa!”

The corners of Klein’s lips quivered. Upon seeing the maid about to wake up, he took a few steps back and vanished from the room with his two marionettes.

Rorsted Sea. On the Future which was docked in the Bayam Resistance’s private harbor.

Cattleya, who was holding a ritual, saw a drop of silver blood fly out of the illusory door that manifested itself from the candlelight.

With just one glance at it, she hurriedly closed her eyes, despite wearing her heavy glasses.

At that instant, it felt like an aloof and mysterious wheel was spinning in a circle, forming a silver snake that had its head connected to its tail.

This made her repeat her previous thoughts as she thanked Mr. Fool twelve consecutive times before returning to normal.

It really is the blood of a Mythical Creature from the Fate domain, and its level is higher than an ordinary angel… Cattleya ended the ritual in delight, and she took out a container she had prepared ahead of time, placing the drop of silver blood inside.

After obtaining some information on the Monster pathway from Queen Mystic, and learning the existence of Angel of Fate Ouroboros from Mr. Fool, she quickly came up with a guess as to who the blood belonged to.

Perhaps it’s the one from the Life School of Thought. Or there might be another Sequence 1 angel… Regardless, Mr. Fool is able to use at least two angels in the real world. Along with that Ancient Bane that I can’t be certain of, aside from the lack of Sealed Artifacts, the faction that believes in Mr. Fool is enough to match that of orthodox Churches. Even the Element Dawn and Moses Ascetic Order can’t compare…

As expected of an awakening ancient god.

Increasingly filled with awe, Cattleya drew a gasp and began considering her matters.

Her other preparations were rather smooth sailing. Without any accidents, all she needed was to wait a month or so to attempt advancing to Sequence 4 to obtain godhood!

Overcast with heavy, black clouds, silver lightning would occasionally streak across the sky, illuminating the desolate plains and the winding rivers that ran dry.

And in the middle of the plains, where the river made a half-circle, black, stacked shadowy outlines loomed. It was a lifeless city.

After several days of traveling, the team led by the Chief of the City of Silver’s six-member council, Demon Hunter Colin Iliad, finally arrived at their destination-Nois City.

The team was a small one. Excluding Colin, there were only four other members. They were the six-member council Elder, Shepherd Lovia, two Sequence 5 Guardians, Legere and Gonlun, as well as Sequence 6 Notary, Derrick Berg. The overall strength of the team wasn’t weaker than a complete expedition team; it was perhaps even stronger.

According to Colin Iliad, this was because Nois City was filled with monsters, making it very dangerous. Shapeshifters were adept at disguises, and they enjoyed making use of the trust between teammates. Therefore, the

smaller the expedition team, the better. And since there were fewer people, there was undoubtedly a need to prepare it with a stronger team.

was

As they watched the city in front of them which was covered in mist, one that couldn’t be lit up despite the lightning, Demon Hunter Colin drew the two swords on his back. Unhurriedly, he slathered a silver-gray ointment on one, and a golden liquid on the other.

He then stabbed the two swords in front of him. He then removed three small metal bottles from a hidden compartment on his belt, pulled out the stopper, and gulped the contents of the potion.

Meanwhile, Legere and Gonlun had made preparations for combat. Derrick Berg held his hammer with one hand as he opened up his other palm. With a solemn tone, he said in Jotun, “God says it’s effective!”

Silently, Colin Iliad and company felt that the consumed potion, the conjured dawn, and the slathered ointment had been significantly augmented.

Right on the heels of that, concentric rings of warm light emanated out, endowing the expedition team with courage and strength.

After Derrick used Holy Oath to boost his agility, Colin shot a glance at Lovia, who was holding an animal hide lantern and standing silently observing. He then turned his head to point at the perimeter of Nois City which was more than ten meters away. He said to the teenager who was once again a little taller, “Use your ability to light up the streets ahead.”

After saying that, he surveyed his surroundings and added, “Once we enter Nois City, make sure we do not separate.

“A few days ago, I had already introduced the more active monsters that hide away in the darkness in this region. All of you should be aware of how

separating will be utilized by the Shapeshifter."

Gonlun was a beautiful, female warrior who was 2.4-2.5 meters tall. Upon hearing that, she thought and asked, "Then, should we make use of this to hunt the Shapeshifter?"

"It's best that we do not do so. It's just too dangerous. Also, it's very easy to end up killing our own teammates or end up becoming lost in Nois City forever," the grizzled Colin Iliad seriously warned.

Derrick looked at the silent city that was cloaked in thin mist as he subconsciously asked, "Your Excellency, was this city also under the Giant King's Court?"

"Yes, but it's very close to a kingdom ruled by another ancient god," Colin answered patiently.

Holding two iron-black poles, the 2.4-meter-tall Legere pressed with intrigue, "Which ancient god?"

"King of Demonic Wolves, the Annihilator, Flegrea."

Is that so… Derrick remembered the Chief's introduction, took a step forward, and extended his arms.

Pure, radiant sunlight emitted from his body, illuminating the either collapsed or rotting buildings, the grayish-white stone-paved streets, and the extremely silent city perimeter.

Derrick and company saw figures appear on the streets. They were either wearing linen robes or animal-hides, as though they were busily going on about their day.

Upon sensing the sunlight's illumination, they silently turned their heads in unison and looked at the City of Silver expedition team.

Bansy Harbor at night would occasionally have ravens or other birds calling out. It accentuated the gloom and deathly silence of the ruins. Even the sounds of crashing waves were unable to wash away that feeling

As believers of the Lord of Storms and crew members of the Blue Avenger, the sailors were bold, especially when they believed that there might be gold or valuables hidden within the collapsed buildings. It spurred them on, sapping away any fear that might exist. The moment they arrived, they rushed down the ship and began searching the area in groups of two or three.

Alger didn't follow them as he strolled through the ruins alone, in search of any marks that appeared after Bansy Harbor's destruction.

As he walked, with him wearing the Whip of Mind ring and having the Blade of Poison slung by his waist, he came to a collapsed building with crumbling walls and a door that was only a few pieces of charred wood.

If I remember correctly, this was the telegraph office of Bansy Harbor… Alger nodded slightly as he approached and did a slight inspection.

He then saw a relatively empty area amidst the rubble. The ground was parched black with two blood-red silhouettes. It was as though two people had been lying there, only to be squashed flat.

And this had been months ago; yet, the two streaks of blood remained fresh, as though they still contained some degree of vitality to it.

Alger's forehead throbbed as he felt as though he could imagine the vileness before Bansy Harbor was destroyed.

He swept his gaze and suddenly saw a picture engraved on a crumbling wall beside the two blood-colored figures. It was a spot that the moonlight could hardly shine onto.

The picture was very simple, and it wasn't even colored. It was of an armored monster with a squid's head that wielded a trident. Lightning swirled around it as waves surged at its feet. Behind it was a cape formed by bird feathers!

Alger's eyes widened suddenly as he felt a tumultuous storm rage within him.

He recognized who the monster was representing because The Sun had once depicted it before:

It was the warped version of the Lord of Storms according to Rose Redemption!

And could this picture's appearance implied that a Rose Redemption member had previously come to Bansy Harbor, and they had drawn this picture after the building collapsed. Otherwise, it was impossible for the mural to not be damaged. It happened to fill an abnormal, crumbling wall!

This should be what The World wanted me to find in Bansy Harbor… He's pursuing Rose Redemption? Alger muttered silently to himself as he raised his right hand.

He had planned on destroying the picture, but after some thought, he retracted his arm, circling around Bansy Harbor's former telegraph office as though he hadn't discovered anything. He then walked in another direction.

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CHAPTER 938
WRITING

Above the endless gray fog, in the magnificent and ancient palace.

The warped picture of the Lord of Storms, one that's suspected to be left behind by a Rose Redemption member… Hmm, Red Angel Medici is one of the founders of Rose Redemption… Klein sat in the high-back chair belonging to The Fool as he silently looked at the crimson star representing The Hanged Man.

Using his feedback, he had basically confirmed that the one possessing Ince Zangwill was the Red Angel evil spirit!

In the eternal silence, Klein silently sat at the seat of honor of the mottled table as though he had become a deity's statue.

After an unknown period of time, he nodded indiscernibly and slowly exhaled.

His figure vanished and returned to the real world. He continued his nap without thinking of any plans or considering anything related to Ince Zangwill.

He slept till the next morning and got out of bed. He repeated his habits over the past few days, walking to the window barefooted and drawing the windows.

On the streets outside the hotel, Danitz, who had dressed up like a West Balam native with an extra hooded cloak, held his iron-black boxing glove close to his chest before rushing to the square on his right. Based on his

previous report, Klein knew that he was meeting one of the local ruling factions today to understand their stance on the arms deal.

Anderson didn't follow. He had ruffled his parted short blond hair in a mess as he leisurely strolled around the perimeter of the square, sat down, and wore a funny-looking puppet over his left black-gloved hand and began putting on a ventriloquist act for the people who walked by.

The man and puppet each had different voices as they mocked each other with witty remarks. It was quite good at attracting attention.

The only problem was that it was done in the Intis language and not Dutanese. Few people understood it, so after standing around to watch for a moment, they walked off.

Klein focused on the Fog Sea's Strongest Hunter with the same expression as before. His eyes betrayed how deep in thought he was.

East Balam, in the temporary office for Soest's Red Gloves.

Cindy, who had long, wine-red hair, walked in with a few telegrams as she said excitedly, "New clues!"

"What clues?" Soest put down the white porcelain coffee mug in his hand as Leonard and Daly cast their gazes to the door.

As Cindy handed the telegram to her captain, she said, "Emperor Roselle's quote 'wherever he steps, whatever he touches, whatever he leaves, even unconsciously, will serve as a silent witness against him,' really makes sense. We've found people witnessing Ince Zangwill in several places, forming a complete trajectory. "From this, we've realized that Ince Zangwill's thoughts seem to be contradictory. He often approaches the colonies of Intis, staying for a short moment, before leaving it. He then approaches it once again and leaves it repeatedly as though-as though…"

Isn’t this what Klein mentioned? That his actions are inconsistent? Leonard was delighted as he offered a better description for Cindy:

“As though he’s oscillating.”

“Yes, oscillating!” Cindy heaved a sigh of relief and began describing the findings, “In addition, Ince Zangwill has killed a few Intis military spies and has purchased several Beyonder ingredients. It’s unknown what he’s trying to do.”

This… Leonard deliberated and said, “Which pathway’s Beyonder ingredients are being bought by Ince Zangwill?”

“They are from the Warrior, Hunter, and Bard pathways.” Cindy pointed at the few telegrams that Captain Soest was reading.

Indeed, there’s the Hunter pathway… Having failed to find an excuse to get his teammates to take notice of Hunter-related clues, Leonard exhaled silently and no longer had any doubts regarding Klein’s theory. He believed it to be the truth!

Next, how should I make everyone realize that Ince has been possessed by an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway… Leonard fell into deep thought. He waited until Soest finished reading the telegram and handed it to the other teammates before he came up with something. He decided to take a risk.

Before he spoke, he subconsciously glanced at Daly Simone. Dressed in a Spirit Medium’s attire, this lady lowered her hand slightly, indicating that he shouldn’t be too anxious, and to stop whatever he was about to attempt.

Ma’am Daly is telling me that it isn’t time, that I should wait for a better opportunity? Amidst his hesitation, he saw Daly flick the telegram in her hand and looked around the room.

“I have an idea.”

“What is it?” Soest asked.

Daly smiled.

“I suspect that Ince Zangwill is possessed by an evil spirit.”

She… She just said it like that… She will be suspected! Leonard jumped in fright.

Without waiting for Soest, Cindy, and company to raise their doubts, Daly continued, “Ince Zangwill was once a Gatekeeper, and now, he’s a Nightwatcher. His body can accommodate evil spirits and use their powers. Furthermore, he also has 0-08’s help. If I were him, I’d definitely try to seek out stronger evil spirits and raise my strength as much as possible.

“This way, before he obtains complete control over the evil spirit, there will be backlashes. Ince Zangwill will take actions that seem contradictory. This can explain what’s mentioned on the telegram.

“In addition, haven’t we been puzzled as to why Ince Zangwill has been trying to contact important members of the Numinous Episcopate, and we had come up with various theories? Perhaps getting them to help him exorcise, purify, or completely control the evil spirit is his goal!”

Soest thought for a moment and deliberated over his words.

“That possibility cannot be ruled out, but this is fundamentally a subjective theory of yours… How did you come up with this? Which details gave you the inspiration?”

Leonard became nervous as Daly chuckled.

“This is a woman’s intuition. It’s just like how I know your thoughts, as well as those of the rest of you at times.

“Besides, since this is a discussion and analysis, we should list down all the possibilities. We should then eliminate the possibilities based on the actual investigations. This will aid us in finding the correct answer. Therefore, we need to let our thoughts wander. No matter how ridiculous the idea is, we must dare to propose it!

“From the various details we obtained from our feedback, I believe my theory is the most likely one.”

Ma’am Daly sure is good with words. At least, she has convinced me… She raised the theory of an evil spirit’s possession to protect me and direct the risk towards herself? On this matter regarding Ince Zangwill, she seems willing to take on everything… Leonard became enlightened as he felt poignant.

After hearing Daly’s reply, Soest nodded slightly.

“Indeed, since this is a discussion, we shouldn’t limit our thoughts.

“The possibility of an evil spirit possession scenario is quite high. I’ll report this to Her Excellency Goddess’s Eye. I’ll leave it to the archbishop and high-ranking deacons to decide the subsequent investigations. After all, we know too little about 0-08.”

“The Red Gloves team led by Soest discovered Ince Zangwill’s abnormalities from the feedback from various telegrams. Daly Simone used this opportunity to mention the assumption of an evil spirit’s possession and had received a unanimous agreement.

“She claimed it to be a reasonable theory, but she was already in the know. She had learned it from Leonard Mitchell, who has a Parasite, and Leonard Mitchell’s information source came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr. Who could be the one who mailed it?

“Meanwhile, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone had already suspected that the evil spirit possessing Ince Zangwill belongs to the Hunter pathway…”

A classic quill dabbed in black ink was writing rapidly on an ordinary notebook as though it was held by an invisible hand.

Suddenly, a silently pale hand reached out and grabbed the quill.

The owner of that hand had dark blond hair with facial features akin to a classic sculpture. One of his eyes was so blue that it was nearly black, and the other was filled with small but obvious blood vessels.

He lowered his wrist and continued writing:

“But is this the truth to the matter? Will everything develop according to what Daly Simone, Leonard Mitchell, and Soest’s Red Gloves team have in mind?”

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, in Nois City which couldn’t be illuminated by the lightning.

The figures looked over without making any sound, giving Derrick a fright. He nearly stopped the illumination effect as he dodged to avoid facing them directly.

However, having trained from a young age, and with his experience over the past year, he didn’t end up flustered. He didn’t rush to end it as he forcefully held back his horror and waited for the Chief to give the next order.

Two dark green, complicated symbols appeared in Colin Iliad’s eyes. He took in the streets that were blanketed with faint mist and the seemingly normal figures which didn’t take any action.

Suddenly, he grunted and genuflected, his hands grabbing the two swords that were stabbed in the ground.

At the back of his neck, his bluish-black skin swelled a little as indescribable and complicated mysterious symbols appeared. They were

half illusory and half real as they crept to either higher or lower levels.

At the same time, Shepherd Lovia let out a painful grunt as she raised her hands and held her head, vomiting some blobs of squirming flesh and blood.

Her palms and her body seemed to have silver armor strangely appear, overlapping on top of her.

“Stop,” Demon Hunter Colin muttered softly one second later.

Derrick hurriedly ended the illumination and allowed the thin mist to cloak the figures, allowing the dead silence to once again blanket the ancient Nois City.

Everything quickly returned to its former form as Colin Iliad slowly got up. He cast his heavy gaze at the tower, cathedral, and other buildings that could barely be made out through the thin mist.

“It’s a bit different from my last expedition. I’m not sure why there are such changes either.” Demon Hunter Colin retracted his gaze as he surveyed the team members. “Do you have any ideas or thoughts?”

Shepherd Lovia had already crouched down to pick up the blobs of flesh and blood that had fallen to the ground. However, she wasn’t in a rush to stuff them into her mouth, to munch on them before swallowing. She offered, “We can change directions and explore Nois City’s other entrances. Perhaps we might discover something.”

She had been maintaining her silence and kept the attitude of a spectator the entire journey. This was the first time she was voicing out her thoughts and giving her point of view.

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CHAPTER 939
BAIT

Colin Iliad glanced at Lovia without giving a direct response. After he pulled out the two swords in the ground, he nodded and said, “Okay.”

The group of five circled around Nois City’s perimeter, making a few attempts to enter, but they were frightened away by the seemingly normal but silent city’s carrying out of its “daily routine.” They didn’t dare to venture in.

With the frequency of the lightning reducing, and how darkness was slowly beginning to rule the world, Colin took a deep look at Nois City for a few seconds and said, “We will first set up a small camp. We will continue when it’s ‘daytime.””

The so-called “daytime” meant when the frequency of lightning was relatively higher, keeping the moments of darkness to a minimum.

The expedition team members didn’t object to it. Soon, they set up a simple camp by the riverside amidst a series of rocks.

At the extreme end of the camp, there was a huge boulder providing them with shelter so there weren’t any worries about rain. A bonfire was burning with all kinds of strange creature carcasses piled to the side. From time to time, they would be thrown in as timber. Colin, Lovia, and company sat around the fire, eating the rations they had brought and the monster corpses that had been proven to not cause serious harm.

As the fat sizzled from the roasting, Chief Colin Iliad from the six-member council looked at Derrick Berg and said, “We shall inspect the camp first.

We'll switch when they're done with their meals."

If this were any other time, Derrick wouldn't have thought otherwise. But now, the first thought that came to mind was: The Chief wishes to speak to me in private…

"Alright." Derrick stuffed the remaining piece of meat into his mouth and lifted the Thunder God's Roar at his side.

The piece of meat was clearly already ready, but it still presented a ghastly green color.

After coming to the dark edge of the camp, Demon Hunter Colin said in a deep voice, his tone unchanging, "Nois City is more sinister and dangerous than I expected. I'm wondering if you have any views on what we should do next?"

I know nothing about this place. I'm also lacking in experience. Why is Chief asking for my views? Derrick was instantly taken aback, wishing to raise his left hand to scratch the back of his head.

He then recalled the few times he had spoken with the Chief while they were in the City of Silver. He recalled Mr. Hanged Man's analysis of the hidden context in their conversations as he suddenly realized something.

Chief is giving me a hint!

He's trying to tell me that Nois City is more sinister and dangerous than he expected. The difficulty of hunting a Shapeshifter far exceeds his expectations. He's wondering if there's a possibility of changing the target?

He wishes for me to pray to Mr. Fool and receive a revelation so as to get "His" views?

Hmm… Mr. World really is a wise person. Along the way, he had already told me of a method to hunt the Bizarro Bane in a relatively easy manner.

It’s by getting its blood. Hmm, with the present situation, it seems like his plan is feasible!

As his thoughts raced, Derrick replied earnestly, “Yes, Your Excellency. I have some suggestions.”

Colin Iliad silently heaved a sigh of relief, holding back the more direct speech he had prepared as he nodded gently.

“Go ahead.”

“Since Nois City has changed, it will be very risky for us to enter. Perhaps we can consider luring the Shapeshifter out.” Derrick didn’t directly regurgitate The World Gehrman Sparrow’s method, but he did make some modifications based on the present situation.

Colin didn’t directly reject it, and said rather seriously, “Then how should we lure the Shapeshifter?”

Derrick didn’t hesitate to say, “I have an item that is extremely enticing to Shapeshifters. As long as it’s placed at the boundary of Nois City, or even further, it will lure a Shapeshifter out.”

The grizzled Colin wasn’t surprised by his words. He amiably nodded and said, “What’s the item?”

He long knew that Derrick Berg had secretly held a bestowment ritual at night during his guard duty shift.

Furthermore, if he hadn’t kept the truth under cover, it was impossible for Derrick to keep it from Lovia, Lovia, and Gonlun.

Derrick didn’t know what its name or description was. He immediately took out an iron-black box which was completely different from the City of Silver’s style before removing the wall of spirituality.

Following that, he didn’t lower his head. Instead, he turned his head and opened the box solely using his sense of touch.

Inside the box was a palm-sized human-shaped object. A cursory glance allowed one to see the transparent liquid filling the inside. From time to time, it bubbled, emanating a black glow. Upon scrutinizing it, there appeared to be maggots circling around the object.

This was the true soul body of the Spirit World Plunderer which Klein had previously obtained!

He believed that, for the Bizarro Bane, this Beyonder ingredient had an unparalleled allure. This wasn’t simply a result of the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence, but it was also because once the Bizarro Bane obtained it, it could turn into a complete Bizarro Sorcerer. It would break through all kinds of limitations and receive a fundamental improvement in its life’s natural order, truly becoming a demigod!

Therefore, to make the hunting of the Bizarro Bane simpler and clearer, without wasting any time, Klein took the risk of losing the true soul body of the Spirit World Plunderer by lending it to Little Sun.

Colin Iliad looked at it carefully for a few seconds before retracting his gaze.

“It’s likely to be effective.

“Close the box and stop adding a wall of spirituality to it. Just bring it around with you. Let’s see if they will be attracted to our camp.”

“They?” Derrick subconsciously asked.

Colin, with a few old scars on his face, revealed a smile.

“Do you think there’s only one Shapeshifter in Nois City?

“If this item’s level was lacking, I would even be worried that it might attract more terrifying monsters.”

Derrick wore a look of shame as he scratched the back of his head. Following the Chief’s instructions, he closed the iron-black square box’s lid, stuffing it into a concealed pocket in his clothes.

In the patrol that followed, he kept a high level of vigilance, but no Shapeshifter attacked.

After a while, Lovia, Legere, and Gonlun took over their mission as Derrick sat back beside the warm

fire.

At that moment, he heard cawing as seven to eight red-eyed ravens flew over and spiraled in midair.

This brought about an indescribable sense of horror. Colin Iliad drew his sword and looked up.

Suddenly, his heart stirred as he quickly cast his gaze to Derrick Berg.

On both sides of the bonfire, two brownish-yellow-haired youths who had childlike looks and were nearly 1.9 meters tall were staring at each blankly.

Colin’s eyes narrowed as he immediately shouted, “Illuminate!”

One of the youths was taken aback. After a moment of enlightenment, pure, warm sunlight was emitted from his body.

With a whoosh, an incomplete shadow swept past as Colin’s sword sliced through the fake Derrick.

It was a shadow, a blurry, transparent shadow!

At the same time, a red-eyed raven fell from the sky. Its body swelled up, turning into a pitch-black shadow.

Above this shadow shimmered a transparent, ghostly-blue single eye. Around the eye were similar eyes but smaller.

Shapeshifter!

A Shapeshifter that could disguise itself as ravens!

Just as this pitch-black shadow landed, Derrick's mind turned numb as he could hardly move, as though he was being petrified. All he could do was watch the enemy pounce at him.

Pa!

The Shapeshifter slammed into an invisible wall and failed to take a further step.

Beside the bonfire, Colin Iliad stabbed the sword in his hand into the ground and drew the other sword on his back.

The surrounding area lit up, and like the legendary dawn, it descended upon this abandoned land. Infinite beams of light reminiscent of dawn erupted, turning into an illusory ocean. It devoured the pitch-black shadows along with all the ravens from the bottom up.

At the entrance of the camp, an illusory knight in silver armor, standing more than five meters tall, appeared behind Shepherd Lovia.

The knight's eyes burned with dark red flames as they instantly locked onto a spot.

He suddenly opened up his stride and appeared hundreds of meters away in a flash.

Beams of sharp silver light shot out, dicing all the objects around into tiny, neat pieces, including all the different monsters hiding there. It included the Shapeshifter that had used some ability to escape the Demon Hunter's lethal strike.

The monster hadn't died as it switched its true body once again, but the pure, bright light of dawn descended once again, completely drowning a huge area.

After the light of dawn turned faint, Colin Iliad in his brown coat appeared with two swords in hand. He calmly watched as points of light gathered above the ground which was covered with cracks. Black-red blood which had mostly evaporated was slowly dispersed.

Success! As Derrick reeled in delight, he hurriedly sealed the black square box with a wall of spirituality.

Colin immediately stabbed the two swords into the ground, took out three metal bottles that had been emptied of their potions, and filled them with the blood on the ground.

While waiting for the ingredient to take form, he said to Lovia and company with his usual expression, "I have a use for the ingredients left by the Shapeshifter. I wish to directly make an exchange for them."

In the City of Silver, there were typically two ways to handle the spoils from such expeditions. First, it was to bring it back and give it to the city and exchange it for the corresponding contribution points. The distribution depended on the amount of effort put in during the expedition. Second, if it wasn't something especially important, and if it had caught the fancy of a member of the expedition, they could directly make an exchange for it with equivalent items or contribution points.

"I have no objections," Legere and Gonlun answered in unison.

Lovia didn't say a word as a form of tacit consent.

After the illusory silver-armored knight returned, she turned her head and looked towards the bonfire where Derrick Berg was with a deadpan expression.

In East Balam, in the temporary office for the Red Gloves.

Soest surveyed the area and said to all the team members, “Her Excellency, Goddess’s Eye, has ordered us to investigate the sale of Hunter pathway ingredients in the local and surrounding cities, as well as any disappearances or deaths of Beyonders of the same pathway.

“She agrees with Daly’s guess, and she suspects from the death of the Intis spies that it’s an evil spirit of the Hunter pathway.

“Of course, we mustn’t ignore any abnormalities since it’s only one possibility.

“There’s also another thing. We only need to do the gathering of information and to ignore everything else. We will not delve deeper into the investigations. It’s an order by Her Excellency, Goddess’s Eye!

“Got that?”

“Yes!” Cindy and company replied.

Soest looked at Leonard and Daly before retracting his gaze and said heavily, “Move out!”

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CHAPTER 940
A STORY

After leaving the local Nighthawks's base which was disguised as a private detective office, Leonard glanced at Daly Simone who had suggested to team up with him.

"Where do we begin? Any suggestions?"

Dressed in a Spirit Medium black robe with her hood pulled over her head, Daly Simone, with an uncanny beauty and mature air, shot Leonard Mitchell a glance.

"This is when a gentleman's decisiveness and style should be showcased."

Leonard looked at his left hand which was wearing a red glove. He deliberated and said, "If we begin by following Captain Soest's arrangements, that might allow us to find some clues, but it's not necessarily useful. I suspect that Her Excellency Goddess's Eye knows that. She's only giving us something to do in order to confuse Ince Zangwill."

"Why do you say that?" Daly wasn't joking as her expression wore a rare, solemn look.

Leonard glanced to his sides as he said in a heavy voice without realizing it, "Based on what I know, 0-08 has the characteristic of 'once you know it, it will also know you.' We shouldn't be influenced while staying on the periphery of its perception since we aren't sure of its real name or powers, and only use the code name we gave it. But as Red Gloves who are pursuing the Numinous Episcopate's matters, and having discussed Ince Zangwill many times, I believe our situation has already been grasped by 0-

08. This way, Ince Zangwill should know that his abnormal state has been exposed. From that, he will avoid us by creating coincidences.”

Daly recalled the information regarding Ince Zangwill and nodded.

“Soest had also mentioned this problem in the beginning. However, he didn’t verbalize it as clearly as you did. It’s still in the stage of backward inference from a result of failures.

“Therefore, Her Excellency Goddess’s Eye has gotten us to investigate the situation of the nearby district’s Hunter pathway Beyonders and ingredients, and pretending as though nothing is confirmed. In the meantime, Her Excellency is preparing the usage of some corresponding items to lay a trap for the moment when the evil spirit gains control over Ince Zangwill and thus appears?”

Leonard turned his body and spoke as he walked:

“That’s probably the case, but I suspect that it’s unlikely for 0-08 to not know of it…”

Daly followed diagonally behind as she said in thought, “I believe there’s still a chance for success. Don’t forget that one of the honorific names of the Goddess is the Mother of Concealment.”

“That can counter 0-08? The Church has a high-ranking member or Sealed Artifact that can counter 0-08? It’s no wonder 0-08 was once obtained by the Church and sealed under the Holy Cathedral…” Leonard’s eyes lit up as he came to a realization.

Daly nodded very slightly as her expression turned soft.

A few seconds later, her pupils contracted as she blurted out, “Do you think our discussion has caught the attention of 0-08?”.

Leonard’s expression fell, but he didn’t dare confirm anything nor shake his head. He and Daly looked at each other, looking back and forth as they fell silent for a moment.

In a particular room, a slightly pale hand flipped a notebook to its very first page, then it flipped one page after another:

“…After leaving Bansy Harbor, Sauron Einhorn Medici, who had obtained a certain object, was no longer only stubborn or only capable of instinctively conspiring. After repeated struggles and resisting, Ince Zangwill and he had obtained a truce and had even decided on having a limited cooperative effort so as to achieve each other’s goals.

“To an evil spirit of the Red Priest pathway, such a promise cannot be guaranteed to be effective, but Ince Zangwill no longer had any other choice.

“From his point of view, this series of matters had many coincidences, but fundamentally, this was inevitable. At the very least, Sauron Einhorn Medici was many times better at creating stories than him.

“…After confirming the destination to be the Southern Continent’s East Balam, Ince Zangwill boarded a ship to the Berserk Sea… Every time, he would enter the Intis colonial islands, irrationally provoking the official Beyonders and hunting Beyonders from the Hunter pathway. Then, before danger arrived, he would quickly regain lucidity, cover his tracks, and flee far away.

“This might seem like a coincidence, but the problem is when it’s the same coincidence every time, is it too much of a coincidence?

“From the perspective of logic and reason, too many coincidences imply that certain elements or rules were secretly in existence. The reason why Ince was able to do that was because he had written the words above. Using the Quill of Alzuhod, he naturally allowed himself to switch between the two states of ‘being possessed by an evil spirit’ and ‘self-autonomy.’ What a

scheming fellow. This wasn't only directed at Ince Zangwill, but also at Sauron Einhorn Medici. They were clearly already coexisting in peace, but they acted out to be in conflict as though they were relying on an external force to achieve some semblance of balance.

"…Ince Zangwill's purchase of additional Bard and Warrior pathway Beyonder ingredients was very reasonable. This was because he was hiding the clues that the evil spirit was using him to seek out various items of the Hunter pathway, and to prevent others from realizing that all of this was under his tacit agreement, disguising it as his attempts to resist. In addition, the Bard and Warrior pathways had the ability to resist the dead and exorcise evil spirits. As long as a clever person were to think it over carefully, they would undoubtedly notice this and verify that Ince Zangwill was being possessed.

"…After numerous provocations, the Iron and Blood Cross Order's Tony Down finally locked onto Ince Zangwill and began pursuing him. During this process, this War Bishop, who had made his goal to become a Conqueror, showed off his powers without any restraint. When a storm happened to stop his pursuit, he appeared on a ship filled with ordinary people in an eyecatching manner before pulling out the fellow disguised as Ince Zangwill.

"This was a little coincidental, but it was nothing surprising. This was because the Iron and Blood Cross Order's belief is for the supernatural to be known to all, and to be placed above all ordinary people. And Tony Down's unbridled arrogance often used his own strength to shatter the doubts of others and had extremely great confidence. Therefore, the way he acted was without a problem.

"Likewise, he was overly confident, causing him to neglect the possibility that Ince Zangwill was also on the ship. This didn't match his intuition as a hunter, but in this world, anyone could make mistakes!

"When Ince Zangwill disembarked on Waypoint Island, he sensed someone observing him from a first-class cabin, but he didn't mind it. This was

exactly the effect he wanted. It was the best development if someone among the passengers happened to know him! Yes, happened to…

"…It was neither too early or too late. Before Soest's Red Gloves took action, Ince Zangwill met with Hand of White Palenque Taciblius of the Numinous Episcopate's Artificial Death faction, hoping to obtain their help in exorcising the evil spirit…"

Traces of words scribbled away.

"…The development of things became a little odd. Before having a sufficient amount of clues, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone of the Soest's Red Gloves team seemed to come to a conclusion. It apparently came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr…

"Where did the problem lie? Ince Zangwill was rather puzzled by this. From his point of view, unless one could directly capture Palenque Taciblius or other key personnel of the Numinous Episcopate, no one could come up with such a conclusion so quickly.

"This made his preparations a little hasty, but thankfully, this was an outcome he wanted.

"…The Red Gloves team led by Soest discovered Ince Zangwill's abnormalities from the feedback from various telegrams. Daly Simone used this opportunity to mention the assumption of an evil spirit's possession and had received a unanimous agreement.

"She claimed it to be a reasonable theory, but she was already in the know. She had learned it from Leonard Mitchell, who has a Parasite, and Leonard Mitchell's information source came from a letter sent by Reinette Tinekerr. Who could be the one who mailed it?

"Meanwhile, Leonard Mitchell and Daly Simone had already suspected that the evil spirit possessing Ince Zangwill belongs to the Hunter pathway…

“But is this the truth to the matter? Will everything develop according to what Daly Simone, Leonard Mitchell, and Soest’s Red Gloves team have in mind?

“…After the discussion with that person in the Cathedral of Serenity, the Cathedral of Serenity’s high-ranking deacon, Ilya, believed Daly’s theory and decided to use a Grade 1 Hunter pathway Sealed Artifact as bait, so as to allow Ince Zangwill to fall into a trap while the evil spirit was possessing him.

“To conceal this goal, she got Soest’s Red Gloves team to continue investigating the relevant clues.

“Unfortunately, their premise was wrong. Although Ince Zangwill was possessed by an evil spirit, his actions had never been affected! All he had done before was an act. It was done in accordance with Sauron Einhorn Medici’s suggestions, with the aim to confuse the Church of Evernight and to make Ilya blindly attack. And a Red Angel evil spirit that was willing to help and cooperate was enough to change the battlefield’s situation.

“Ince Zangwill’s true motive for coming to the Southern Continent is:

“Hunt the high-ranking deacon, Ilya, of the Church of Evernight! It was for his advancement preparations by obtaining her Beyonder characteristic!

“He wanted to prove to everyone that the Church of Evernight had made a foolish mistake to abandon him back then!

“Of course, before beginning this operation, Ince Zangwill had to first satisfy Sauron Einhorn Medici’s thirst-a thirst for Mid- and High-Sequence Beyonder characteristics of the Hunter pathway. To keep it a secret, he didn’t plan on hunting locally, and he had prepared to do it further away.

“When the evil spirit’s undying nature, Red Angel’s level, and the uniqueness of a Gatekeeper combined, Ince Zangwill possessed the relatively High Sequence ability of ‘Spirit World Traversal’ of the Death

pathway. He was able to head to remote areas and return in short periods of time. He had deliberately kept this under wraps before.

“After satisfying Sauron Einhorn Medici, Ince Zangwill decided to first kill Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell and pretend to vaguely sense the Church of Evernight’s trap. He would forcefully counterattack, only to lose his rationality and head for the trap.

“He didn’t plan on leaving any unstable elements. All avengers that survived Tingen had to die!”

The notebook flipped to an empty spot as a pale-white hand grabbed a quill and added the words: “Today, everything will go smoothly.”

West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa City.

“You aren’t done with your investigations?” Anderson asked in boredom as he walked beside Danitz.

“Soon!” Danitz replied as he found it a little difficult to focus. “Do you have something to do?”

At this moment, Anderson took out a map and a stack of information. He said with a chuckle, “I’ve already figured out the rough location of an ancient mausoleum. Based on the traditions of East and West Balam, there’s definitely plenty of treasure in it. Here, death doesn’t mean an end but a new beginning. That’s why they have tons of burial items.”

Danitz was taken aback as he asked in surprise, “I thought you aren’t proficient in Dutanese?”

How did he gather the information?

Anderson chuckled and raised his black-gloved left palm. He spread his fingers and said, “I don’t, but I can temporarily steal their language until I finish finding the information.”

“…I knew a fellow like you will have some tricks up his sleeves!” Danitz said with gritted teeth as he pointed to the main street beside the square. “Goodbye!”

Anderson didn’t stop him as he smilingly watched him walk away with large strides.

At this moment, the two simultaneously noticed a figure walking over.

The figure held a classic quill and wore a black clergyman’s robe. He had dark blond hair with facial features akin to a classic sculpture. One of his eyes was so blue that it was nearly black, and the other was filled with small but obvious blood vessels. He was approaching Anderson and Danitz.

Anderson didn’t know the middle-aged man, but his body couldn’t help but tremble as though he was facing his nemesis.

Warning signs of danger flashed in his mind as his pupils rapidly dilated!

Suddenly, he heard a warm voice by his ears:

“Don’t be nervous.”

Who… Anderson blankly turned his head and saw a figure strangely appear beside him despite there not being anyone there in the first place.

This figure had apparently been there all this time, but he had always been ignored.

He wore a strangely simple white robe. He had a pale gold beard that covered half his face. His light-colored eyes were clear like a child’s. He had a genial and reserved look.

Looking at the quill in Ince Zangwill’s hand, this middle-aged man who was dressed like an ordinary priest half-closed his eyes, raised his right hand, and gestured four points before him.

Hanging there was a silver cross.

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CHAPTER 941 DEVELOPMENT THAT ADHERES TO LOGIC

The moment he saw the middle-aged man dressed in a priest's getup, Anderson zoned out for a second. Following that, some shackles in his mind suddenly collapsed as countless memory fragments surged through an invisible barrier. It felt like long-suppressed feelings suddenly erupted.

He remembered the things that had happened over the past two months. He remembered the mission that the demigod had given him!

Back in Bayam, he followed the thoughts in his mind to meet up with the demigod. He followed him and left the Rorsted Archipelago for a secret location.

There, he met the priest beside him. It was arranged for him to enter an ancient coffin, to lay there among Beyonder ingredients and a liquid filled with strange mixed blood, allowing them to seep into him.

After a month of this corrosive treatment, a dark red chrysalis formed inside his body. He then had his memories from this period of time sealed before being sent to West Balam. He was then psychologically cued to not leave until he recovered his memories.

This meant that he hadn't finished the demigod's mission and that it was still underway. Everything that had happened before were just preparations!

Scenes flashed through his mind as Anderson discovered that while he was playing the harmonica on the streets, checking into the hotel with Danitz,

obtaining of Language Comprehension charms from the Church of Knowledge's preachers, as well as his arrival in Northern State—all of these incidents had this genial and seemingly innocent priest present beside him the entire time.

When having meals, he was sitting at a neighboring table. When he checked in, the neighboring room was his. When walking on the streets, he was walking right beside him. When playing the harmonica and putting on the ventriloquist act, this man was looking at him in a genial manner!

And Anderson hadn't noticed any of this back then. Danitz, who was beside him, the people around him

-none of them had noticed him. It was as though they had never seen this priest before!

A chill that arose from deep in his heart ran from his tail bone up his spine to his brain. He felt that the experiences he had been through were enough to drive him insane, to the point of losing control.

Danitz, who had already opened up a distance from Anderson, looked at the black-robed clergyman, Ince Zangwill, and then he looked at the simple priest who was praying with his eyes closed. He hurriedly bowed his head and used ancient Hermes to softly chant, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

A few days earlier, he had received Mr. Fool's revelation to handle some matters as a guise to stay around Anderson. It was so that he could immediately pray if any abnormalities were to happen.

Although he didn't know what would happen, or who he had encountered, Danitz, who always cherished his life, didn't hold back and did as he was

toldeven if the abnormalities that happened might very well be him being overly imaginative!

For this, he had specially worn the boxing glove made from Groselle's Beyonder characteristic. It ensured that he would act first without thinking so as to not waste any time!

At this point, Ince Zangwill had stopped walking. His dark blue, nearly black eye and the eye filled with blood vessels reflected the priest in simple white robes who had a cross hanging by his chest.

In his mind, in his mouth, a furious voice sounded:

"Adam!"

The Creator's son, King of Angels, Adam! Before Ince Zangwill could finish his sentence, the priest opposite him opened his eyes. His light-colored eyes were already pure gold in color.

Suddenly, pitch-black stone columns were erected around them, setting up a majestic cathedral.

Inside this cathedral, each column, each arch, and each dome's surface was embedded with the bones of different races. They were densely packed as they used different eye sockets to stare at Ince Zangwill. They surrounded a cross that was more than a hundred meters tall.

In front of the cross, a blurry figure stood there as though he was watching everything with compassion.

This was a cathedral of corpses, but instead of appearing eerie, it was filled with holiness!

The walls, windows, and doors of the cathedral had transparent, warped faces protruding out. It was as though countless souls were sealed inside,

preventing Beyonders from sensing the existence of the spirit world or astral world!

The square and pedestrians from before had vanished. They were kept outside the corpse cathedral that had suddenly appeared.

Ince Zangwill's classic quill had already flown up as it wrote rapidly on his black clergyman's robe:

"Anderson Hood is Gehrman Sparrow's friend. Ouroboros had taken notice of him, and due to various unknown reasons, Ouroboros's appearance here was a development that adhered to logic!"

Just as the quill wrote the exclamation mark, light beams shone in from the colored-windows of the corpse cathedral, forming stacked illusory pure feathers.

Beneath the enveloping feathers, a figure with long silver hair materialized in a genuflecting, praying stance. Following that, the figure stood up straight.

"He" wore a simple linen robe and had handsome looks and soft facial features. He was none other than King of Angels, Tail Devourer Ouroboros!

Ouroboros's eyes were momentarily unfocused, but it soon reflected the genial priest's image.

In "His" eyes, at "His" feet, and on the stacked feathers of light behind "Him," a supernatural, mysterious circle was accentuated, forming an illusory river like a snake that had its head connected to its tail.

The corpse cathedral once again reverted to the point when the pitch-black stone columns erected with the surrounding square were still on the border of existence.

Taking this opportunity, Ouroboros flew out. Ince Zangwill didn’t hesitate as he made the surrounding colors saturate and overlap against each other.

Just as this Nightwatcher was about to step into the spirit world, he suddenly saw a cross spanning more than a hundred meters in size plummet down from high above.

This cross impaled the middle of the unformed corpse cathedral as the blurry figure that carried the cross raised its head.

Infinite light spewed out, drowning Ouroboros and the quill-holding Ince Zangwill within.

The corpse cathedral filled with bones of different races and the countless warped souls took form once again.

Upon hearing the stacked, illusory pleas, Klein was inside his hotel and thinking about his daily miscellaneous matters and lampooning in boredom.

He suddenly stood up, went straight to the window and looked towards the nearby square.

On the square, coffins were coming and going. The fountain was still spewing, and there was reverberating music. Everything seemed normal and even felt idyllic. Here, what seemed most unharmonious was Anderson genuflecting with a stiff expression while a trembling Danitz was closing his eyes praying. Without a second thought, Klein followed the plan he had formulated above the gray fog. He controlled Winner Enzo who was a hundred meters away to enter the telegraph office. He had instructed Danitz to live beside a telegraph office!

At the same time, he took out his adventurer’s harmonica and blew into it.

Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. All eight eyes turned to the square.

“For Leonard, Miss Messenger. He likely hasn’t left your detection range.” Klein took out a letter he had already prepared and a gold coin before handing it to Miss Messenger.

What he said and did was akin to a marionette. He only followed the instructions he had prepared in advance. If he couldn’t help think of something else, he would immediately use Cogitation to divert his attention.

This was the method he figured out from Will Auceptin on how to deal with 0-08. By doing the thinking above the gray fog, all he did was act according to plan in the real world.

And in a particular prayer from Danitz, Klein had used the scene that appeared to observe Anderson who was nearby. In the end, he discovered an unfamiliar priest who also felt familiar by his side.

Thinking back to the Psychology Alchemists and the Twilight Hermit Order’s hidden connection, and making the connection to the content in Emperor Roselle’s diary, Klein immediately realized something. He was certain about what would happen next:

The master of the Twilight Hermit Order, the son of the Creator, Angel of Imagination Adam, was conspiring to obtain 0-08!

This also meant that there was a high chance for Ince Zangwill to appear with Anderson as the target!

Then, Klein redid his plan above the gray fog, pretending as though he had never noticed anything. He continued his state as a “marionette in reality.”

One of Reinette Tinekerr’s heads bit onto the letter as the eight eyes looked deeply at Klein for two seconds.

Klein nodded indiscernibly without a word, watching Miss Messenger return to the spirit world.

In the Cookawa telegraph office, Winner Enzo handed over the telegram, address, and verl gold he had already prepared for the staff, urging them to send it immediately.

“West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa. Ince Zangwill has appeared.”

The radio waves quickly spread, sending the message to the major bases of the Church of Evernight in West Balam and East Balam.

East Balam.

“Why are you always active around the cathedral? Why don’t you go further to carry out the investigations?” Daly asked Leonard.

Leonard thought and said frankly and seriously, “Awaiting news.”

Daly nodded in thought without prying further.

She turned silent, no longer playing jokes on Leonard. It was as though she was waiting for something as well.

Suddenly, Leonard’s spiritual perception was triggered as he turned to look left.

As a Gatekeeper, Daly had already cast her eyes in that direction.

A letter had appeared at some point in time, landing underneath a gas street lamp.

Leonard didn’t avoid Daly as he hurriedly picked up the envelope and opened it.

The content of the letter was very simple. There was only one line:

“West Balam, Northern State, Cookawa, Revival Square. Coordinates…”

Leonard’s expression turned heavy as he turned to Daly and said, “Ma’am, please help me to cover my tracks.”

As he spoke, his left glove had turned transparent. He stuffed his right hand into his pocket and grasped the Fate Siphon charm.

Daly fell silent for a second and said extremely seriously, “Bring me along.

“Back then, you managed to at least fight, but I didn’t have the time to do anything.”

Leonard’s expression changed as his mouth gaped slightly. Finally, without saying a word, he grabbed Daly’s shoulder.

The two then vanished from the rather empty streets.

As he watched Miss Messenger leave, and once he confirmed that the telegraph office had at least sent one telegram, Klein immediately took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. He directly sat at the high-back chair of The Fool and beckoned for the Tyrant card, the Sea God Scepter, and a silver-gray charm.

Immediately, he was wearing a papal tiara with a papal robe draped over him with a bone scepter in hand.

Amidst silver bolts of lightning, Klein spread his spirituality towards the point of light where Danitz was.

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CHAPTER 942
DEITY'S CURSE

With Klein’s spirituality making contact, the points of light suddenly expanded into a scene before his eyes.

With his Shadow Cloak up, Danitz was praying with his head bowed in the corner of the square, chanting The Fool’s honorific name with ancient Hermes.

Thanks to this, Klein could see an expanded area around him, and he began searching for Ince Zangwill.

Through the gray fog, everything he saw was clearly different from what he had previously seen. In the middle of the square, a pitch-black corpse-embedded cathedral had appeared at some point in time. It was dark inside, but there wasn’t any signs of activity inside.

Using this opportunity, Klein replied Danitz’s prayer, “Leave the area. Find a hidden spot to hide in.”

As he spoke slowly, dressed in the papal tiara and dark robes, Klein raised his left hand and made the blue gems at the tip of the bone scepter light up.

Sharp, jarring sounds immediately resounded in Revival Square in the real world as a sudden gale swept the area. It made the people who were spending their leisure time there or the pedestrians to leave quickly to head for shelter from the wind. Even Anderson, who had a frozen expression, recovered his usual insouciant attitude. Holding his abdomen, he quickly rushed out of the dangerous area.

In a few seconds, Revival Square became extremely silent. Even the pedestrians who walked slowly without running had experienced the feeling of flying with the nudging of the wind.

The empty area entered a brief silence. Then, a flame appeared from the corpse cathedral's window. It grew in size and became increasingly blinding.

Silently, the colored glass windows shattered as blinding white light that bordered on blue shot out like a meteor.

This flaming light instantly crumbled, materializing into Ince Zangwill, who wore a black clergyman's robe and had one dark blue eye and one eye covered with blood vessels.

The moment this Nightwatcher appeared, he couldn't help but open his mouth and scoff at the classic quill in his hand.

"If a fool like you didn't listen to my suggestion, how could something like this happen!

"I'm not even sure what you're afraid of. If you had allowed me to pray to the Lord, allowing me to secretly return to the Rose Redemption and join forces with the 'Serpent,' our preparations would allow us to set up a trap. Today, we will be the ones hunting Adam, and not the other way round!"

The seemingly dark and damaged quill immediately flew up and wrote on an empty spot of Ince Zangwill's clothes:

"Due to a rage stemming from embarrassment, Sauron Einhorn Medici pushed the blame of this development to the Quill of Alzuhod, but in fact, it was 'He' who was stopping himself from praying to the True Creator. Be it Sauron or Einhorn, neither one of them trusted this evil god.

"Today's development made this evil spirit's psychological dissociation to worsen! This is extremely reasonable. This is the diagnosis by the best,

most professional psychiatrist!”

“Ince Zangwill” immediately frowned as he raised his left hand and pressed it to his head.

His dark blue eye rapidly recovered its luster as the classically sculpted face turned extremely stern.

At this moment, having escaped the corpse cathedral, he was no longer facing the square. Instead, it was flights of ancient stone stairs. They were leading to the peak of a towering mountain. Erected there was a huge cross with countless angels spiraling around it.

At this moment, an exaggerated bolt of silver lightning tore through the overcast sky, smiting right down at Ince Zangwill.

The sealed and strange space produced cracks. The fountain and its splashes appeared in his dark blue

eye.

Ince Zangwill’s figure immediately vanished, leaving behind a blurry transparent spirit. The latter was struck by lightning and was instantly obliterated.

This Nightwatcher didn’t have the luxury of time to consider what other lurking dangers there were. He took this opportunity to transform into a flame as he penetrated a crack and rushed out.

To him, no matter what lay ahead of him, nothing was more terrifying and difficult to deal with than the Son of the Creator, King of Angels Adam!

Upon seeing the flame rise up from the square, allowing Ince Zangwill to escape the restraints of the illusory world and returning to his appearance with dark blond hair and pale hands, Klein raised his head slightly and subconsciously sat straight.

Countless scenes flashed across his mind-him having his heart penetrated, the pair of bright leather boots just before his previous death, Dunn Smith smiling at him with a wink of his left eye, and the Blackthorn Security Company which had been reduced to ruins.

The corners of Klein's mouth quickly curled upwards as he revealed a comical smile.

He then deeply muttered using ancient Hermes, "Misfortune!"

The silver-gray charm on his right palm suddenly burst into a gloomy black light.

This was a charm of the misfortune domain Klein made using Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin's blood and precious metals by praying to the Evernight Goddess.

This was a present he had prepared for Ince Zangwill.

This was an arrow of vengeance.

This was a deity's curse!

Klein immediately stood up, stretched his shoulders, and threw out his right arm, fusing the gloomy black light with the little powers he could stir from above the gray fog as he threw them at Ince Zangwill.

Just as Ince Zangwill returned to Revival Square, he saw a dark black beam appear out of nowhere. It blanketed the entire sky, making him find himself in an extremely dark environment.

Such a change happened in a flash before everything was restored to normal in an instant. Nothing seemed amiss, but as a Nightwatcher who could give others a certain level of bad luck, Ince Zangwill acutely "smelled" the aura of danger. Without any hesitation, he reached out his left palm in a bid to

use the evil spirit within him and his powers as a Gatekeeper to enter the spirit world and flee.

However, none of the surrounding bright flowers, pure-white fountain, and dark black tiles had their colors saturate, much less become stacked.

Ince Zangwill's Spirit World Traversal had become ineffective!

The glint in his eyes froze as he seemed to understand the reason. It was because the evil spirit in him was having an internal struggle; thus, they wouldn't lend him their power.

"See? Everything would be fine if you had listened to

me!"

"Bullsh*t! I'd rather die than believe in the True Creator!"

"What's the point saying all of this? Didn't you still end up the same as us, being made into a potion by Alista Tudor?"

"So none of you are nervous at all? Didn't you notice that the curse clearly came with a deity's aura? That power was fundamentally very powerful. Our present condition doesn't allow us to avoid it at all. Haha, continue arguing. Go on! I'll wait to die with all of

you."

…

The veins on Ince Zangwill's forehead throbbed when he heard that. He was furious that Sauron Einhorn Medici would suddenly engage in an internal strife at such a critical moment. They didn't seem to notice the danger they were in at all.

As a former archbishop, as a Beyonder who had watched over the Church of Evernight's Holy Artifacts, Ince Zangwill didn't let his judgment become clouded because of his rage. He instinctively believed that the gloomy black beam had something to do with the Evernight Goddess's authority over misfortune. He believed that Sauron Einhorn Medici's sudden fallout was clearly a result of this influence. Otherwise, it was impossible for the Red Angel evil spirit to break into a quarrel without concerning themselves with the situation they were in simply because of the Quill of Alzuhod's writing!

He immediately turned around, quickly running towards another exit of Revival Square in an attempt to communicate with other spirits. He wished to borrow their powers to escape; however, there wasn't a single spirit around!

At this moment, a figure stood in a hidden corner of the open square. He was a mixed-blood with parents coming from Loen and Balam. He had a fleshy face and baggy clothes. On his waist hung a rapier.

It was Admiral Hell Ludwell!

This was a marionette who usually didn't have any thoughts!

After throwing out the Deity's Curse charm, Klein followed his plan, returned to the real world, and made use of the two marionettes!

As he made Enzo find a corner, he took out the items he prepared, set up a bestowment ritual, and controlled Admiral Hell to walk to a secluded spot to face Ince Zangwill.

This Admiral Hell, who looked nothing like his original self, raised his right hand, allowing his arm and fingers to rapidly turn incorporeal as they extended towards the target.

This was a power he used by borrowing the Underworld creature within him to extract the Spirit Bodies of others remotely!

Ludwell’s palm quickly turned pale-white, and above Ince Zangwill, a figure floated up uncontrollably.

However, Ince Zangwill was once a Gatekeeper. An illusory bronze door filled with mystery immediately took form in his eyes as it quickly pulled back his escaping Spirit Body.

With his level and strength, this was unlikely to succeed so successfully, but for some reason, he repeatedly made mistakes and nearly allowed Admiral Hell to succeed. For a brief moment, all he could manage to do was a see-saw-like struggle.

At this moment, two figures rapidly appeared beside Ludwell. One of them was the black-haired, green-eyed Leonard with a transparent glove in hand, and the other was Davy Simone who had blue eyeshadow and blush.

They had arrived at the perfect moment because the bad luck of an enemy often implied that one was lucky enough!

The first thing Daly saw was the figure she could never forget. Pangs of fury burned in her eyes instantly.

She didn’t rashly attack as she made some observations. She came behind Ludwell and spread her arms.

A bronze door filled with countless strange patterns immediately descended and creaked open a gap.

This was a door that led to the Underworld. It was a door filled with allure to all undead creatures!

An indescribable and terrifying suction force came out of it as the figure above Ince Zangwill’s body completely separated from him.

It was a translucent man wearing blood-stained black armor. He was young and handsome with red hair. His face had terrifying signs of decay, and at

his glabella was a flag-like mark.

This young man wasn't too surprised about being separated from Ince Zangwill. Instead, he sneered.

"We sure are unlucky today. We have already died together once, so is there a need to do so another time? Especially when we're being controlled by such a weakling?"

A bloody gap appeared on his upper left cheek as it opened and closed.

"Alright, let's clear out the surrounding trash…"

Before the sentence was finished, the man in blood-stained black armor reached out his palm and drew out an illusory sword with dark red rust stains from his body.

A terrifying suppressive force easily allowed the evil spirit to free itself from Ludwell's and Daly Simone's extraction. It swooped down in an attempt to return to Ince Zangwill's body.

At this moment, a hoarse voice sounded, sounding as though it held sandcloth in it. Admiral Hell Ludwell had chanted in ancient Hermes, "Fate!"

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CHAPTER 943
THE THIRD ACT

“Fate!

In the awkward-sounding voice, the spots where Admiral Hell Ludwell and Nightwatcher Ince Zangwill stood turned dark as if they were covered by two black clouds.

Fate Siphon charm!

This was one of the Fate Siphon charms that Klein had made using the Worms of Time from Pallez Zoroast!

To make plans without 0-08’s knowledge, he had kept himself hidden behind the scenes the entire time. Not only had he lent Creeping Hunger to Leonard Mitchell, he had also given the Fate Siphon charm to his marionette!

Hence, the one who was possessed by the evil spirit had gone from Ince Zangwill to Ludwell.

Admiral Hell instantly had Sauron Einhorn Medici’s blood-stained, black-armored body plunge into him as his eyes became filled with minute blood vessels.

Inside the hotel, Klein calmly controlled the marionette without showing any wavering or hesitation due to the impact the evil spirit had. Ludwell reached out to tear his clothes and raised the soul-soothing mask to cover his face.

At the same time, having heard the Red Angel's words, and witnessing "His actual condition, Daly Simone, who had suffered immense pressure, seemed to realize something. Not only did she not close the Door to the Underworld, she even gritted her teeth and used all her might to widen the gap.

Bloody, skinless arms, slimy tentacles with teeth, and bluish-black vines with baby faces began emerging from the Door to the Underworld as they grabbed at Ludwell.

This freed up Admiral Hell who had planned on completing this step alone. Taking advantage of the opportunity that the Underworld within his body hadn't yet been destroyed by Sauron Einhorn Medici, with the only negative effects on his body being decaying, he hurriedly turned around and dashed towards the mysterious, illusory bronze door!

He was then grabbed on his body and legs by the arms, tentacles, vines, and spirits behind the door. With his running working hand in hand with the scalp-tingling tugs, he instantly leaped through the widened door gap and entered the Underworld.

Upon seeing this, Daly immediately pulled back her palm and stopped maintaining the mysterious-patterned bronze door.

Thud!

The indescribable illusory door closed heavily. Admiral Hell Ludwell, along with Sauron Einhorn Medici, were kept out of the real world with the Underworld creatures.

This was a key step to Klein's plan. It was to forcibly separate the Red Angel evil spirit from Ince Zangwill!

Although he believed that the Red Angel evil spirit was the reason for Ince Zangwill's instability, he wasn't willing to face an additional evil spirit formed after the deaths of one King of Angels and two Sequence 1 angels

when taking revenge on a demigod. No one could predict what actions a Conspirer would take under such circumstances.

Therefore, Klein used the basis of the magical powers of the Fate Siphon charm and Ludwell's pathway characteristic to formulate a plan. The addition of Daly had allowed the entire process to happen more smoothly. There wasn't any room for being interrupted as they successfully pulled the Red Angel evil spirit into the Underworld!

This way, even if the evil spirit was able to possess Admiral Hell's body and travel back to the real world via Spirit World Traversal, it would be far into the future. After all, to leave the Underworld required them to find an exit, and with the Evernight Goddess wielding control over Artificial Death, she had a certain level of authority in the Underworld. "She was definitely not letting the Red Angel evil spirit leave so easily.

Sacrificing a marionette, a high-level charm, and two mystical items in exchange for removing the Red Angel evil spirit from the battlefield was heart-wrenching for Klein, but it was definitely worth it!

As for the misfortune on Ince Zangwill, on the one hand, it was a continuous state and not a short-term affliction; and on the other hand, he had suffered from Deity's Curse. The Fate Siphon charm could only replace a tiny portion of that and not empty it out. He could soon recover. As for Ludwell, he had Winner Enzo imbuing him with good luck. Nothing would stop his series of actions for a short period of time.

Such a change was completely unexpected for Leonard. However, he had become a Red Glove for almost a year. He had plenty of experience dealing with supernatural cases, so he didn't show any hesitation or confusion. He immediately cast his gaze at the still-dazed Ince Zangwill.

When the figure in a black clergyman's robe with one dim eye was reflected in his eyes, his expression immediately warped as though he was facing a trauma of his.

It was a trauma where he did his best but had failed to put it to use. It was the trauma of seeing Captain and Klein already dead after regaining consciousness.

As Leonard raised his left palm, he pressed the human-skinned glove to his temple and grasped the Fate Siphon charm in his right hand tightly. With a deep voice, he said, “Fate!

The ancient, supernatural language echoed as a transparent book condensed in front of his left glove. Following that, there was the ethereal chant of “I came, I saw, I record.

Bolts of bright, blinding silver lightning blasted down one after another as they instantly devoured Leonard.

Lightning Storm!

This was akin to Leonard holding a revolver to his temple before pulling the trigger.

He was committing suicide, but at the same time, he was using the Fate Siphon charm. This would transfer such a fate to Ince Zangwill!

This was the best solution he could think of when using the Fate Siphon charm and Creeping Hunger! It required immense courage!

Countless silver lightning swept over, shattering the surrounding darkness. Leonard Mitchell immediately snapped awake and found himself still standing at his spot. His left hand had yet to rise, and his right hand had just grabbed the Fate Siphon charm.

Whatever he did was just a dream!

At this moment, in Ince Zangwill’s dark blue eyes, darkness was slowly swirling. It was as though it was saying: When did you get the misconception that you aren’t dreaming?

In fact, long before Sauron Einhorn Medici had been extracted from his body, he had already created a large-scale dream in an attempt to pull all his enemies in. Unfortunately, the man with a rapier was in no way affected. He easily escaped and ended up destroying the dream, reducing its effects to nothing.

As the ability to detect danger which was gained from one's spiritual perception feedback was that obvious, and with the possibility of the conflict between the two Kings of Angels behind him spilling over at any moment, Ince Zangwill didn't hesitate to create a large-scale slumber effect while pulling Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell into a dream.

Right on the heels of that, he picked up Quill of Alzuhod and rapidly wrote on his sleeve:

"Ince Zangwill was in optimal condition today. He could effectively control his Mythical Creature form; therefore, he didn't hold back and used all his strength to escape the area!

As he finished writing the sentence with the quill, Ince Zangwill's body began transforming.

His eyes instantly turned black as though it was tainted with ink. The fine patterns around him began to extend, forming strange and distorted mysterious symbols.

At his waist and ribs, his clothes swelled as four skinless arms grew out from squirming flesh; they were covered with blood vessels.

The arm was rapidly covered with white feathers as a cadaveric aura rippled out.

At the same time, Ince Zangwill's teeth grew long, turning sharp. His body seemed to be embedded with numerous blurry, tiny faces.

In a blink of an eye, this Nightwatcher was already slumped on the ground, turning into a strange monster with eight “legs and white feathers!

Night suddenly fell upon the square as worms in the soil and the bacteria on the floor tiles died one after another, entering an eternal slumber.

This was the combination of the powers of Evernight and Death!

Just as Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell were about to lose their lives amidst their slumber, a thunderclap boomed.

Bolts of silver lightning struck down, turning into a forest of lightning that blanketed Ince Zangwill’s incomplete Mythical Creature form.

After sending away the Red Angel evil spirit, Klein didn’t stay any longer. Like a marionette with preset orders, he mechanically took four steps counterclockwise and entered above the gray fog. Wearing the papal tiara and papal robe again, he picked up the Sea God Scepter!

This was the third act of the play. With 0-08 exhausted by Adam, and with the Red Angel evil spirit separated from Ince Zangwill thanks to the Fate Siphon charm, he had to face the Sea God’s wrath as a Sequence 4!

Klein knew that he didn’t have the strength to directly fight a demigod. Therefore, his plan had been to wear off Ince Zangwill’s helpers while smiting him from above the gray fog. It was akin to the sea battle with the demigod, Qonas Kilgor, who was from the Black Emperor pathway back then.

Even if he couldn’t complete the kill due to a demigod’s potency, he could stall for time until the Church of Evernight’s archbishop or high-ranking deacons with Sealed Artifacts arrived!

In this plan, there were two uncontrollable parameters.

First, it was unpredictable how much influence 0-08 had towards the end. A card up his sleeve was to let Enzo set up a bestowment ritual and be prepared to send Groselle's Travels to the real world at any time. By sending it to the edge of the battle, Klein wanted to know if this would lure the quill away from Ince Zangwill. After all, he guessed that the quill was a Grade o Sealed Artifact of the Spectator pathway. It was likely that it was interested in the special book left behind by the Dragon of Imagination.

Second, he wasn't sure how strong the Son of the Creator, Adam, was. Klein had no reference point, and he believed that it wasn't impossible for a King of Angels like him to subdue 0-08, imprison the Red Angel evil spirit, and kill Ince Zangwill alone!

Towards such a development, Klein had no means to foil it. All he could do was pray for the Goddess's blessings and Fate's tenderness as he waited for the outcome.

Rumble!

The lightning forest smote down, bringing with it intense destructive auras.

At this moment, pure darkness surged out of the gaps in the lightning, devouring all of the silver-white swath.

Right on the heels of that, Ince Zangwill's eight "legs moved rapidly as he ran out of the area.

He couldn't find a target of attack, nor could he lock onto the enemy that had cast Lightning Storm. Holding back his furious emotions, he ran towards buildings along the perimeter of the square, leaving shadowy afterimages behind.

However, amidst booming thunder, terrifying lightning bolts smote down one after another, trapping Ince Zangwill inside the square.

Daly and Leonard had already woken up from their dreams, but the light from the lightning affected their vision, allowing them to discover that Ince Zangwill had apparently turned into a monster, but the details were unclear.

Mythical Creature form… As the two had a solid foundation in mysticism, they immediately realized what was happening and quickly closed their eyes. They then retreated to a spot that provided them shelter.

Realizing that he was unable to dodge the lightning strike given the amount of time he had, Ince Zangwill retracted one of his “legs, picked up 0-08, and as he ran, he wrote on his body:

“An unknown existence is attracted by the combat and feels great pity for Ince Zangwill’s experiences before deciding to help him by taking him away via the spirit world!

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CHAPTER 944
THE FOURTH ACT

On the heavily scuffed and damaged Revival Square, the environment turned dark as a gloominess and eeriness filled it in a seemingly corporeal manner. Even the blinding silver lightning wasn't able to dispel this feeling.

Daly Simone acutely sensed that an unknown creature was crossing the spirit world and approaching. An ominous feeling rose up in her as though she could already see Ince Zangwill using such an accident to easily escape, never to be found.

She felt ice-cold in a manner that couldn't be resisted, just like when she first became a Beyonder.

Back then, due to a particular accident, as a nineteen-year-old, she had lost her family and ended up drinking a potion by mistake. She ended up becoming a Corpse Collector and was placed into a Nighthawks team.

The influence of the potion and the wounds from losing her family had made her enjoy gloominess and coldness. She couldn't help but approach corpses, often loitering in cemeteries and sleeping there.

This made her appear odd, with people instinctively avoiding her. This not only dropped her body temperature, but it also slowly froze her heart and soul as they turned ice-cold.

She was afraid of this feeling. She still hoped to live as a person; hence, she instinctively used how men coveted her for her looks and body to gain a boyfriend. She wanted to use the warmth of a body to stop her soul from turning cold.

In this decadent and surreal life, she met that man, a man who always warmly listened to her. He was a man who always stayed by her side and provided her help. He was a man who became embarrassed when faced with jokes involving the two sexes. He was a man who accepted all the flaws and weaknesses of his teammates with a sincere attitude. He was a man who fumbled in helplessness when she jested at him again and again. He was a man who hid the pain and sorrow in his heart, to the point of suffering an early receding hairline. He was a man who was the first to step forward when encountering danger, putting himself in between the danger and his teammates.

She changed. She began putting on makeup that made her appear older. She stopped mixing with other men but kept her jokes to deliberately express that she hadn’t changed in an obvious manner.

However, she still didn’t make it in time. She didn’t manage to witness the man master the acting method, digest potions, and advance to Sequence 6. She didn’t manage to see him reach out his hand to invite her to an opening dance or be able to participate in his final battle. She didn’t manage to tell him her feelings in time.

I was wrong. I failed to do anything in time. Today, I’m not having it repeat again… Daly’s expression turned sorrowful as the corners of lips curled bit by bit with tenderness and sweetness.

With her eyes closed, she suddenly pulled out a small metal bottle from a hidden compartment. She threw the stopper and gulped the liquid inside.

Her blue eyeshadow and blush instantly brightened, and even her skin turned slightly translucent. Her coiled up hair was instantly released, pushing her hood back as they fluttered.

“Spirit wandering the void, higher-order creature that leave one with awe, the unforeseeable creature, Daly chanted with simple and forceful ancient Hermes, “I, I shall sign a contract with you in my name, pray that you leave this place!

Behind the eight-“legged, the white-feathered Ince Zangwill, a figure appeared. It was a blood-colored piece of flesh with countless eyes on it and arms of different races.

Just as it was about to grab Ince Zangwill and drag him into the spirit world, it suddenly paused. It then turned its gaze towards Daly Simone.

Pitch-black snake-like scales instantly appeared on Daly’s skin, and within the gaps of the scales, white feathers grew.

Her knees buckled as she knelt down in pain, but she ultimately maintained her spirit channeling posture.

That quill began writing autonomously on Ince Zangwill’s body.

“The unknown existence descended upon Revival Square and was just about to take Ince Zangwill away—but no, it was attracted by Daly Simone. Its sense of aesthetics was inclined towards humans. Oh no, it abandoned Ince Zangwill. It decided to listen to Daly Simone’s suggestion and ended up leaving.

“How surprising that when it came to spirit channeling, Ince Zangwill, a demigod, would actually lose to Sequence 5 Daly Simone. Although this lady had consumed the Flower of Spirit and paid an immense price, she had little chance to defeat Ince Zangwill who was barely using the Quill of Alzuhod.

“Ince Zangwill was just too unlucky. He actually encountered a matter with nearly zero probability! Amidst the lightning strikes, blood-red beams lit up in Ince Zangwill’s pitch-black eyes that were covered with mysterious symbols before calming down. His “hand which held the quill wrote on his body once again:

“Another unknown existence was lured into the vicinity and attempted to enter the real world…

Just as he wrote that, the quill suddenly paused as it continued writing:

“Incoming! Incoming! It, no— ‘She’ was Reinette Tinekerr! No, Reinette Tinekerr chased away all the surrounding creatures in the spirit world. ‘She’ gave Ince Zangwill a glance, looked away, and left, continuing ‘Her’ patrol of the surroundings.

“Ince Zangwill is too unlucky, just too unlucky!

Ince Zangwill’s rapidly-moving body suddenly paused as though he had suffered a terrible blow.

Boom!

A thick bolt of silver-white lightning smote the eight-“legged monster. It sent Ince Zangwill flying up as he let out an inhuman cry.

In his pitch-black eyes, the blood-red beam spread out like an explosion, turning into two bloodthirsty, cruel, and maniacal blobs of light.

“Ince Zangwill could no longer control his emotions and maintain a good state of mind. He lost most of his reason… The more the slightly damaged quill wrote, the darker it became until it slowly stopped.

With a scream that left one with goosebumps, an endless darkness blanketed the area, pulling Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell into a dream.

However, the thunder booms and lightning snapped the dreamers awake.

Ince Zangwill took a step back with his eight “legs, leaving behind an afterimage in his spot. He rapidly ran towards Daly Simone who was on the brink of losing control, hoping to rip apart the Nighthawk who had foiled his plans for escaping.

Boom! Boom!

Ridiculous bolts of lightning blasted down, stopping his attempts to escape.

Boom! Boom!

The eight “legs that were covered with white feathers, which now had signs of being charred, moved one after another as he kept his body low while he circled the square, dodging the lightning in search for an opportunity to kill Leonard and Daly.

With time, he realized there was a problem with the remaining reason that he had. The frequency of the lightning was dropping!

The person that kept casting Lightning Strike had apparently reached his limit, and his spirituality was almost drained!

Ince Zangwill’s heart stirred as a cruel smile was plastered across his face. He ran at high speeds as he muttered in ancient Feysac, “All of you will die!

He had apparently forgotten of his need to escape.

All of you will die… Leonard Mitchell could do nothing despite hearing that sentence. It was because he couldn’t even open his eyes. He couldn’t determine where Ince Zangwill was, nor use his spirituality to lock onto him.

At this moment, he felt as if he had returned to Tingen, back to the Blackthorn Security Company, back to the day where they engaged Megose in an intense battle. He had returned to the time when he was weak and helpless, unable to stop anything himself.

Back then, he clearly wanted to help Captain and Klein. Despite overcoming his horror, despite having Old Man to provide him with help, he quickly fainted due to his low Sequence and lacking strength; thus, failing to participate in the subsequent battle. All he could do was wake up

to see two corpses and use the pain of meeting family members to resolve the blame he placed on himself.

He always cherished his leisurely life in Tingen City, the feeling of not needing to take any responsibility as if he was the protagonist. However, the more he cherished those memories, the more he hated his former self, wondering why he hadn't worked harder.

With his eyes tightly closed, figures of light were darting around, and all he could do was ball his hands into a fist as he hurriedly shouted, "Old Man!

"Old Man!

This time, there wasn't any response in his mind. No one provided him any help, as Pallez Zoroast was still in a deep sleep.

Leonard's breathing turned heavy as he couldn't help but move his head from side to side with the darting of the light. Then, with a slightly hoarse voice, he shouted in clear anxiety, "Old Man!

"Old Man!

"Old Man!!

His voice gradually softened, drowned by the thunder. Leonard hung his head bit by bit, his face filled with shame and pain.

His lips quivered as he relaxed his hand and gripped it tight again. His entire body froze for several seconds.

Suddenly, he wore a firm expression. With a grimace, he opened his mouth and chanted softly in ancient Hermes, "The Fool that doesn't belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog. "The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck!

Just as he said the prayers, he magically saw a scene in his mind.

Ince Zangwill, who had seemingly turned into a spider or some deformed feather wolf, was running frantically and dodging the lightning strikes. From time to time, he attempted to attack him and Daly Simone.

And unlike normally, Ince Zangwill's figure appeared rather blurry in this scene. It was almost completely represented by red light, and it could only be used to determine his location.

Leonard was first taken aback as he immediately laughed. Teardrops flowed down as he laughed.

Without any hesitation, he raised his left palm, pressed the glove to his temple, and then tightly gripped the Fate Siphon charm with his right hand.

"Fate!

The incomprehensible, mysterious word in ancient Hermes resounded as a transparent book appeared in front of Leonard. It flipped to a page amidst the ethereal chanting of "I came, I saw, I record, as he locked onto the eight-"legged monster with white feathers growing all over him.

Silver bolts of lightning blasted as Leonard Mitchell threw out the charm with a hideous expression, shouting, "Die! Ince Zangwill!

He had waited to say this for a very, very long time. He had played this scene in his head so, so many times.

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CHAPTER 945
THE STORY'S ENDING

The moment the Fate Siphon charm left Leonard Mitchell’s hand, it vanished into midair, its whereabouts unknown. It cloaked the spots where he and Ince Zangwill stood in darkness. Even the burgeoning silver storm was unable to illuminate it.

At that instant, Leonard felt the surface of his body turn numb, as though lightning was leaping over it, creating a slight stabbing pain, one that would completely pulverize his body at any moment.

But following that, he didn’t get bombarded with irresistible pain, as though nothing had happened.

No, something did happen. A bolt of lightning smote down at him as if it had bared its fangs, shattering the ground and charring the soil.

Klein had personally redirected his casting of Lightning Storm from Ince Zangwill when Leonard Mitchell used the Fate Siphon charm!

"Ah!"

A shrill scream sounded as the rich darkness around Ince Zangwill failed to dissipate the storm that was formed from a mesh of silver lightning bolts. His body was swept into the heart of the storm.

He had suffered the fate of Leonard Mitchell being devoured by the Lightning Storm ability!

Boom!

The thunder boomed deeply as the lightning forest quickly dissipated, but before the Lightning Storm came to a complete end, more bolts of silver lightning smote down from the sky, causing a new wave of attacks.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The wrath of a thunder god smote down again and again as the lightning's frequency returned to normal. There weren't any gaps in between. Even though there were waves of darkness surging out from Ince Zangwill's position, they were unable to obliterate the silver swath.

After a few Lightning Storms, the blinding light finally dimmed. The minute bolts snaked around weakly.

Ince Zangwill remained standing there without collapsing.

However, his head with pitch-black eyes, blood-red halos, and mysterious symbols had cracked. The flesh inside the cracks was charred black as a grayish-white liquid seeped out.

The four "legs" by his torso had already been burnt black and curled up together. All it took was a touch for them to fall off.

On them, not only were the white feathers gone, even the overlapping blood vessels were pulverized and had scattered to the ground, leaving them at head height with him.

But even so, Ince Zangwill still wasn't dead. Creatures that had obtained godhood had an unimaginable vitality compared to ordinary people!

The blood-red halo in his eyes grew richer as the violent aura no longer had any room for decreasing. Feelings of hatred and regret surged in him, giving him the urge to vent them out.

He hated himself for only thinking of escaping in the beginning and not killing all the enemies present. Back then, if he hadn't held back and had

used his powers by releasing the terror of a demigod without any reservations, he was definitely able to kill Daly Simone and Leonard Mitchell amidst the lightning strikes. If he had done so, he wouldn’t have been left in such a sorry state by two Mid-Sequence Beyonders.

"Damn it! Damn it!" Ince Zangwill roared and threw away the darkened 0-08 quill. Using his remaining four "legs," he pounced at Leonard Mitchell.

Leonard was just about to take action when he felt a coldness in him. It was as though thin, long hair was reaching out and binding him from the darkness, doing so from a dream. He was unable to move again.

Boom!

A bolt of lightning struck Ince Zangwill, but it only served to stagger him for a moment and drop a few pieces of charred flesh. He continued his attack and even revealed a cruel smile.

From that strike, he was already certain that the person hiding in the background casting the lightning was at their limit. The person was unable to use any more demigod-level powers!

As for Leonard, who was being bound by countless strands of invisible hair, his thoughts quickly became serene. It was as though he no longer put up any resistance and had wished to sleep in the darkness.

Unable to move, he bit his tongue lightly and temporarily recovered some of his lucidity. He made the transparent book in front of him emit the ethereal chanting: "I came, I saw, I record!"

With a resonating whoosh, a terrifying Hurricane swept at Ince Zangwill, who had arrived with a pounce.

It snapped the illusory black hairlike objects, giving Leonard freedom again.

Whoosh!

Ince Zangwill was thrown up as he slammed heavily to the ground. His body was covered with deep gashes as pale-white blood gushed out of him.

Despite having lost another front "leg," he still wasn’t dead. He "stood" up again and locked onto the Evernight poet who still had his eyes closed.

Without any warning, Leonard suddenly slipped and fell to the ground. When he tried to get up, he seemed unable to maintain his balance. Even the gale he created had failed to sweep up his body.

"Damn it! I should’ve killed you when you were unconscious back in Tingen City!" Ince Zangwill cursed through clenched teeth. "That woman is about to die. The same goes for you!"

As he cursed, he hobbled over to Leonard’s location as though he had lost his ability to move at rapid speeds. With a ferocious expression, he said, "Your captain was irritating. Likewise for that teammate of yours. All of you are the same!

"After I kill you, I’ll leave this place and return to Tingen to dig up their graves!"

As he cursed, the darkness filled with cadaveric auras surged out of Ince Zangwill, sweeping towards the nearby Leonard Mitchell.

Leonard could sense that he was riddled with bad luck, but he could do nothing. He didn’t even dare to open his eyes.

Bang!

Amidst a gunshot, a pale-golden bullet pierced through the thick deathly darkness, bringing out blinding sunlight, terminating the abnormality within.

Pa! Tarot cards flew over, stabbing into the ground at different spots.

One of the cards landed in front of Leonard as it burst into scarlet flames.

Amidst the flames, a figure wearing a half top hat and black suit walked out with a revolver in hand. With a bookish demeanor, he had black hair and brown eyes with a face with a deep outline. He was none other than Klein Moretti.

Unable to use the Sea God Scepter anymore, he had decisively returned to the real world. He had rushed here with Death Knell!

"You, it’s really you! You really are still alive! Die together with them!" Ince Zangwill’s movement speed instantly recovered as he circled around Klein, trying to forcefully pull him into a dream.

He had been acting!

However, Klein was completely unaffected. He didn’t show signs of falling asleep as he raised his right hand and pulled the trigger as though he had foreseen it.

Bang!

Ince Zangwill was thrown to the ground by a powerful impact. The cracks on his head widened.

"That shot was for Ma’am Daly," Klein said in a deep voice as he snapped his fingers. Using the flames that burst up, he flashed to the side of Ince Zangwill.

Ince Zangwill’s eyes protruded out. As he moved at high speeds, he released bad luck in a bid to influence Klein, but it was completely useless.

"This shot is for Leonard."

All the Tarot cards were ignited at the same time, like bursting fireworks. Klein flashed behind Ince Zangwill, cocked the gun, and relying on his intuition, he pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Pale-white blood spurted out of Ince Zangwill’s left leg as it broke.

His running came to an abrupt stop as he even failed to maintain his balance.

Using the burning tarot cards, he repeatedly cast Flaming Jump, preventing himself from entering the influence of the black "hair."

"This shot is for Megose.

"This shot is for the Keepers.

"This shot is for the destroyed Blackthorn Security Company.

"This shot is for all the Nighthawks.

"This shot is for me."

Amidst the gunshots, Klein kept pulling the trigger and did the corresponding reloading as he shot demon-hunting bullets. He blew through another of Ince Zangwill’s legs, blasting open his forehead, causing his roars to turn into a whimper until he fell onto the ground.

Finally, Klein flashed in front of Ince Zangwill. He then held Death Knell to his face.

At this moment, mysterious patterns accentuated Ince Zangwill’s almost-cracked head, creating an immense impact.

He still had the ability to resist!

He was waiting for him to approach and then use his Mythical Creature form to turn the tables!

However, Klein’s brown eyes continued looking at him without reflecting anything.

He thrust Death Knell forward and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

Ince Zangwill’s head completely exploded, and like a smashed watermelon, the fragments and the juice splattered everywhere.

Death Knell had sounded the knell for him!

Klein raised his left hand and rubbed away his two eyes. The real eyes that hid beneath were moved back to their original spots.

His brown eyes had blurred up. He curled the corners of his mouth bit by bit and said to the already dead Ince Zangwill softly, "This shot is for Captain."

He didn’t give Ince Zangwill a chance to leave any last words. He had no wish to know what bitter past the latter had experienced.

He then took out one remaining tarot card from his pocket and threw it on Ince Zangwill’s corpse.

It was an inverted The Star card.

At this moment, a figure appeared not far from him. He bent down and picked up the darkened quill.

This figure wore a simple white robe and had a pale gold beard that covered half his face. On his chest hung a silver cross as though he was the most ordinary priest, but he was the King of Angels, Adam!

Adam looked at Klein and said with a genial smile, "Unfortunately, I failed to retain the snake."

He looked at the quill in his hand and then at the tarot card. He smiled and added, "A price is always exacted for what fate bestows(1), isn’t that so?"

With that said, he turned around and slowly disappeared from the ruined square with each step he took. He left the following words as though he sang it:

"Under the witness of a Spectator, Klein Moretti completed a grand performance, directing a magical murder. With that, he managed to digest his potion with enough energy left to attempt an advancement before the curtains fell."

Klein didn’t take in the feeling of his Marionettist potion’s digestion and the corresponding feedback. With a Flaming Jump, he arrived in front of Daly Simone.

The lady was already on the brink of losing control. She said in a daze, "I don’t want to become a monster…”

"Alright…” Klein looked at her with a sorrowful gaze as he quickly thought of the means to rescue a Rampager.

He had considered getting her to chant The Fool’s honorific name before pulling her Spirit Body above the gray fog, but with her body already mutating, it was apparently useless. The only way was for Daly to choose to remain there forever. As for the Flower of Blood, it was also unable to resolve such problems.

Daly smiled with great difficulty as she resisted the white feathers and pitch-black scales that kept growing out of her.

"So it’s you…

"Didn’t you ask me why I didn’t take the initiative to confess to Dunn, to throw him in bed?"

She gasped for air and said with a bitter smile, "I had indulged myself too much in the past. H-he was a conservative man. I-I felt inferior."

She couldn’t hold out much longer, with the outcome of her becoming a monster happening at any moment.

At this moment, she heard Klein Moretti reply, "Captain actually liked you too, very much. Because you were too outstanding and young, he felt inferior as well."

Daly smiled as her blurry gaze saw a man in a black trench coat with a receding hairline. He had dark gray eyes. She watched as he pressed his hand to his chest, bent down, and reached out his palm to invite her to a dance.

She reached out her hand as her thoughts turned sluggish.

The gray-eyed man in a black trench coat pulled up Daly, whose mutation was slowly fading away. Under Leonard’s watch, they danced a brisk dance in the destroyed square with the fountain spewing water everywhere.

One material after another flew out. There were golden grapevines and a rather ugly rubber mask. Under the guidance of spirituality, they slowly mixed together and entered a small metal bottle.

Amidst the beautiful dance, Daly leaned forward gently, resting herself in Dunn’s embrace.

Klein held the potion bottle, brought it to his mouth, and downed it.

[1] Quote from Stefan Zweig.

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CHAPTER 946
A BESTOWMENT OR A CURSE

The ice-cold potion slid down his throat, bringing Klein numbness, one that reached deep into his soul.

He had already stopped dancing. His mind seemed to be lifted as though he was high in the air, looking down at the ruined Revival Square, at Cookawa City which had been left in shambles by the repeated lightning strikes.

At this moment, he felt his emotions rouse up for some baffling reason as all the pedestrians below seemed to be connected to him by some invisible threads. They could be happy, angry, or sad, making all kinds of actions based on his directions.

Klein often had such feelings recently. He knew that this was the vision of a "director." By viewing all participants as marionettes or actors, he attempted to control or guide them into putting on a grand performance.

Using that hint of familiarity, Klein hurriedly adjusted his state of mind, completely separating his emotions from it, and viewing everything in a cold, aloof manner, so as to prevent himself from being affected by the play.

As a "director," he followed the script, referred to reality, and rationally made an analysis to choose according to the circumstances. He allowed emotions to build up, allowing himself to push matters forward and use the clues that had developed.

Once his state of mind settled, he felt the potion’s power spread across his body, like a sharp threaded net.

Suddenly, Klein felt that his Soul Body was connected to his physical body. They were split into countless parts, and without being able to hold it in any longer, he let out a cry from deep within his soul.

"No!"

His thoughts were diced apart, turning into fragments as they fused with different pieces of flesh as he gained his own sentience.

These included Klein with pain, Klein with arrogance, Klein with coldness, Klein with gentleness, Klein who could amusement himself, as well as Zhou Mingrui, Sherlock Moriarty, Gehrman Sparrow, and Dwayne Dantès!

His entire Spirit Body seemed to be thrown into a grinding machine.

Not far away, Leonard, whose cheeks were streaming with unconscious tears, first saw Captain Dunn, who was embracing Daly Simone, transform back into Klein Moretti. Following that, he noticed his face, neck, and the back of his hands. Pale-colored tendrils protruded out as though they had a life of their own. They kept growing outwards, turning into a transparent maggot. And beneath his clothes, there were also signs of squirming.

This made Leonard have the feeling that Klein would collapse into a cluster of transparent maggots the next second as they raced in different directions!

Just as he wanted to do something, he felt dizzy. He instinctively closed his eyes and didn’t dare to keep watching

The transparent maggots that grew out of Klein’s body shimmered under the sunlight, producing three-dimensional layers of mysterious symbols. They connected to higher and lower levels, directly presenting the abstract concepts of bizarreness, madness, change, strength, and wisdom.

Amidst howling cold winds, black illusory threads rose up around Klein as they bonded together, forming strange "tentacles."

The tentacles flailed as his Soul Body, Astral Projection, Body of Heart and Mind, and Ether Body were reduced to fragments as they fused with the different maggots that represented Klein’s various thoughts, turmoil, and dilemmas. As they wafted between them gently, they seemed to fly up to an infinite height where there were countless illusions hugging huge distorted buildings. They were either playing wind instruments, giving speeches, growling, or raving.

Amidst Klein’s countless chaotic senses, everything around him stacked together as though they turned into the spirit world. However, there were living people coming and going with the stars shining upon them.

At this moment, the fragments filled with thoughts had similar memories appear-fresh memories:

It was of King of Angels Adam praying with his eyes closed. It was the scene of his shocking appearance;

It was him using Death Knell against Ince Zangwill as he pulled the trigger to blast open his head;

It was when he revealed his Clown’s smile, saying in a deep voice, "This shot is for Captain";

It was when Spectator Adam used an extremely clear and innocent eye to take in the ending of the performance;

It was of him turning into Dunn Smith, inviting Daly Simone to dance the closing dance.

They were all so fresh on his mind, especially the gaze of a Spectator. There was a seemingly corporeal feedback that felt like a magnetic force. It made Klein gradually discover his sense of self-awareness once again.

I…

Who am I?

This was a question that Klein had an answer to when he was still a Faceless. He didn't need to think too much about it as he quickly understood his identity:

A person from Earth, a person who had been reconstructed from Klein's memory fragments;

A person whose experience as a Nighthawk deeply influenced him;

A person who played safe and was afraid of danger, but was able to persist and give up everything;

A guardian and a miserable wretch.

Strange sensory organs that didn't come from the Body of Heart and Mind or Soul Body were extracted bit by bit from the fragments, condensing Klein's new thoughts—coldness, calmness, spectating, and overlooking. They were thoughts that allowed him to view the world from even more angles and dimensions.

He knew that this could possibly be godhood. Without putting up any resistance, he chained the original Spirit Body fragments with black threads, allowing him to slowly take form again.

At this moment, he realized the purpose of the advancement ritual.

It was a mark, an anchor. Compared to other pathways, the Bizarro Sorcerer, who experienced the fragmentation of their Soul Bodies, required an anchor much earlier!

However, this didn't require the support of any faith. On the contrary, faith was a numerous and jumbled affair with too many personal feelings involved. During the fragmentation during this ritual, it easily wiped away

the humanity of the advancer who was only Sequence 5, leaving behind godhood.

A grand and profound performance under the watch of countless spectators was enough to make up this anchor!

Although the spectators were few in number, as the pinnacle existence of the Spectator pathway, Adam could match thousands of ordinary spectators. He could even imagine a theater of spectators to create the effect.

With his entire body taking form, all kinds of knowledge surged out from the depths of his demigod Spirit Body, embroiling Klein’s mind and giving him an indescribable impact. It felt as though his brain was about to explode.

However, with some level of godhood and his rich experience, he could view this in a detached manner and rather easily pass through this stage.

The transparent maggots on his face, hands, neck, and beneath his clothes returned into his body, turning back into the black-haired, brown-eyed Klein Moretti.

Looking at Daly Simone, who was still in his embrace and slowly turning cold, he lifted her up and walked to Leonard Mitchell. He bent down and placed her on the ground.

Daly no longer had pitch-black scales or white feathers. She had been restored to normal and her eyes were closed. The corners of her mouth were curled up like she was having the deepest and sweetest dream.

Klein stood up and looked at Leonard, who had opened his eyes again, and said heavily, "She has returned to the Goddess’s kingdom, just like Captain."

He had turned her into a marionette to reverse Daly’s mutation, allowing her to die like a human before releasing his control over her.

Leonard tried to force a smile as he whimpered a sound of acknowledgment. Tears were streaming down his face.

Klein gently nodded his head.

"To her, this might not be the worst outcome. She returned as a human to the embrace of a deity she believes in, and that’s where Captain and the others are."

As he spoke, he subconsciously and sincerely raised his right hand and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

Leonard instinctively drew the sign of the crimson moon. He was momentarily taken aback as his expression turned odd.

Klein surveyed the area and said, "Take Ma’am Daly back with you to East Balam. Make it known that she died due to Ince Zangwill’s attack and had made exceptional contributions in causing Ince Zangwill’s death.

"Don’t worry, no one will investigate you. Of course, you can take this opportunity to leave the Red Gloves."

"I-I’m used to the Church," Leonard said heavily.

Klein took off his hat and bade farewell with a bow.

Holding his hat, he turned to walk to Ince Zangwill’s body and took a card that had a chariot and a red priest on it.

The red priest wore the face of Roselle Gustav.

Leonard’s lips quivered as he suddenly asked, "A-aren’t you returning to the Church?"

Klein didn’t turn around as he wore his silk top hat and headed for another exit of the square.

After a few steps, he paused and replied to Leonard with his back facing him:

"I can’t return anymore…”

Can’t return anymore… Leonard stared in a daze as the familiar figure gradually distanced himself and vanished.

After a while, a few Beyonders flew to Revival Square. One of them was wearing the clergyman robes of the Church of Evernight. She had a head of beautiful raven-black hair and an exquisite face.

No one could tell her age, because no one cared. They could only notice the eyes that seemed to contain countless stars within.

This lady was floating in midair as she looked at the square. All she saw was Ince Zangwill’s sorry corpse that could hardly be recognized. Covering his cracked head was a commonly-seen tarot card.

It was The Star.

Above the gray fog, Klein placed the Red Priest card by his left hand and closed his eyes to rest for a moment.

He had a basic grasp and understanding of the powers of a Bizarro Sorcerer.

On the one hand, he could transform into animals that weren’t too disparate in size. In a Spirit Body state, he could completely ignore this point. He could transfer wounds from either himself or others onto a paper figurine. He had also gained the enhancement of the Flaming Jump ability that now spanned nearly a thousand meters. The might of Air Bullet reached that of a cannon.

On the other hand, he could now obtain initial control of one’s Spirit Body Threads in three seconds. He could turn a target into his marionette within fifteen seconds. His control range was 150 meters. At the same time, he

could switch Spirit Body Threads, allowing his marionette to obtain all his Beyonder powers. Within a thousand meters, he could switch locations with his marionette as he wished.

Due to this point, and the maggots he separated as a Mythical Creature form, as well as the disguise from the Spirit Body Threads, Klein obtained a higher level of body doubles. This also meant that, as long as any one of his marionettes were alive, a Bizarro Sorcerer would never die!

The enemy often found it difficult to know if the one killed was the Bizarro Sorcerer or his marionette. What was real and what wasn't was difficult to determine.

After confirming his state and resting for a moment, Klein immediately walked deep into the mysterious space above the gray fog. He headed for the staircase of light that seemed to lead to heaven.

As he expected, there was another step, one formed of light.

This time, Klein believed that he could use this sixth step that resembled a giant's to step onto the condensed gray cloud.

One step, two steps, three steps… He came to the end and, with a leap, stepped onto the cloud formed by the gray fog.

Reflecting in his eyes was a door of light tainted with a bluish-black luster. It was formed from countless layers of spherical light, and each spherical light enveloped squirming maggots. Some of them were transparent, others translucent. This was the scene Klein saw through Enzo's eyes, but the objects were very blurry, as though something was obstructing his vision.

In addition, above the door of light, there were thin black threads that hung down. They were hanging up what seemed like completely transparent cocoons.

These cocoons were gently swaying, wrapping different souls. They looked to be of all descentsAfrican, Asian, Caucasians, etc. Some were wearing jeans, others holding cell phones. Some had beautiful clothes, others having beautiful facial features. All of them had the aura as though they were living, but their eyes were tightly closed.

Klein’s gaze froze as though he had returned to Earth and had walked onto the streets which were filled with people.

Then, he noticed that three cocoons had opened. They were empty and were swaying with the wind.

Raising his head, Klein took in this sight as he observed in silence.

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CHAPTER 947
HOUSE CALL

Backlund, East Borough, in a two-room apartment.

A few policemen in black-and-white checkered uniforms opened the door and entered. All of them reached out to cover their mouths.

There was a strong stench of blood inside!

"Officer, I’ve no idea what happened. Other tenants said that it seems like there’s plenty of blood here that they can even smell it from next door." The landlord with a silk top hat looked around in fear, unwilling to stay in the room for another second.

A black-haired, blue-eyed police officer with an inspector epaulet waved his hand and said, "Wait by the door. We still have questions for you."

As he spoke, he wore his white gloves and cast his gaze towards the wooden door of the bedroom.

However, he wasn’t in a rush to enter. He slowly surveyed the area and visually took in the surroundings-a pile of coal, a cupboard with cutlery and food, a small stove, a cleanly washed iron pot, a somewhat greasy table, two collapsed circular stools, two slanted chairs, a few glass bottles with unknown powders, and a stack of scattered tarot cards.

"A mysticism enthusiast with an ordinary financial situation?" The black-haired, blue-eyed inspector nodded gently as he made a judgment. Then, he signaled for a subordinate to open the bedroom door.

With a creak, a stronger smell of blood gushed out.

The constable who opened the door looked in and let out a short exclamation as he repeatedly retreated.

The inspector frowned. He pressed the retreating constable’s shoulders, circled around him, and approached the bedroom.

When he swept his gaze, his expression immediately changed.

In the bedroom, on a wooden bed, there was a man lying there. His hands were tied to the bedpost.

He was naked with deep and shallow marks on his body. His blood had long been drained, dyeing the bedsheet and blanket beside him dark red.

On a cursory glance, the deceased had apparently been bound by metal wire, cutting into his skin and flesh, right into his bones.

This scene still affected the policemen who had seen many murder scenes. Furthermore, it had a diabolical feeling like it was a ritual.

As the inspector was about to say something, two people rushed into the room. One of them attempted to take photos while the other bombarded him with questions.

"Another murder case?

"Hasn’t there been many murder cases in East Borough recently?

"Officer, do you think it’s a serial murder?"

The black-haired, blue-eyed inspector frowned and waved his hand.

"Do not interfere with the scene; otherwise, we will view you as the criminal’s accomplice."

He then said to the constable from before, "Khazix, please escort the two reporters away. Tell them that if they have any questions, ask the news department of Sivellaus Yard."

After the reporters were escorted out of the crime scene, the inspector let out a long sigh.

"I’m going on the newspapers again. Damn it!"

In Empress Borough, the opulent villa of Earl Hall.

"Another murder in East Borough. The victim is suspected to have been abused before being killed…” Having had dinner, Audrey was in the activity room casually reading the Backlund Evening News.

Upon hearing his daughter’s soft muttering, Earl Hall shook his head and sighed.

"This isn’t new in East Borough. The statistics show that there are people dying every day in there. It’s far from one person."

Audrey didn’t pay too much attention to the matter. After a casual chat with her parents and brother, she returned to her room with her golden retriever, Susie.

The human and dog could read each other’s minds without any exchanging of words. The latter stood by the door as a guard while Audrey locked the door. She sat by her bed and chanted Mr. Fool’s honorific name.

After a few seconds, she saw a dark red beam of light surge and drown everything.

Audrey arrived above the gray fog, coming inside the magnificent and ancient palace.

She then saw a small room to the side. The mottled door was ajar.

It’s much better than the old confessional from before… However, this doesn’t match Mr. World’s character. Did something happen to his state of mind? In thought, Audrey entered the room and closed the mottled door.

She had previously had a follow-up appointment with The World Gehrman Sparrow and concluded that he had fully recovered. To her surprise, she received a request from him for another treatment.

This left her puzzled as she felt a little intrigued.

In the rather spacious dark room, Audrey leaned against the wall that obviously had another person behind it. Her body slowly slid down as she knelt down with her legs placed diagonally.

In the calm and serene atmosphere, she adjusted her state of mind and said with a brisk tone, "Good evening, Mr. World~"

Just as she said that, Audrey’s spiritual intuition already knew the situation with his Body of Heart and Mind, or in common parlance, his emotions or mood.

Gloomy, disheartened, confused, depressed, and having no interest in anything… Mr. World’s current problem is completely different from the last one… What happened this time? Audrey gently bit her lip and calmly made a judgment and used a timely Placate.

This was the most useful power of a Psychiatrist. In ancient times, it was called Psychoanalysis.

The "dark clouds" behind the wall scattered significantly. Gehrman Sparrow finally hoarsely said, "Good evening, Miss Justice."

Leaning against the wall, Audrey thought and canceled her original plan. She maintained her brisk tone and said, "I’m very curious about your recent experiences. It seems you have had too, too many encounters.

"There’s no need to think about anything else. Let’s have a chat first, just like we’re friends.

"If you’re interested in my life, I’m also willing to share with you some of the interesting matters."

On the opposite side of the wall, Gehrman Sparrow fell silent for a moment. Without answering the question, he asked, "What hopes do you have for the future?"

Audrey’s eyes darted slightly to the side as she replied seriously, "To advance myself, to work hard to become a demigod so as to better protect my father, mother, and brothers.

"Oh, I’ve recently visited the applicants to the bursary foundation with the other staff of the foundation. Their living conditions are really worse than I imagined. Although I’ve read some reports and was mentally prepared, I still found it unsettling when I saw it with my own eyes. A girl who’s just a few years younger than me was very short and skinny. She doesn’t fill her stomach daily, and she only has two tattered dresses. When she said that she wishes to study, her eyes were extremely pure and filled with an earnest desire. I can’t forget it to this day…”

As she spoke, Audrey acutely sensed the change in Gehrman Sparrow’s mental state. It was no longer a completely still lake, and it was now rippling and undulating

After a short deliberation, this Psychiatrist continued as though she didn’t seem to notice anything, "I once anticipated having a beautiful wedding, wishing that my ‘prince’ will appear like those popular novels. However, after becoming a Spectator, I realized that I might never be able to fulfill this dream. I can often read the true thoughts of those men and see through their lies. I’m able to confirm that many people aren’t as nice as I imagined, and it has left me disappointed. Hmm, in a few more years, I might be able to appreciate people for their flaws, but it’s really difficult to do so now…”

Noticing that Gehrman Sparrow, who had his back to her across the wall, having the emotions of laughter, Audrey did a timely Placate on him. Then, she heard him ask, "You once gathered information about dragons from The Sun. You should have some understanding of the Dragon of Imagination.

"If I were to tell you that your father, mother, and brothers are imagined by the Spectator pathway's King of Angels and that they do not really exist, what would be your reaction?"

I'll definitely collapse on the spot and directly lose control… Mr. World has a psychological problem because of his discovery that the thing that he has been anticipating-his ultimate goal—will never be fulfilled? Audrey was first alarmed by Gehrman Sparrow's question before she realized the essence of the question.

She didn't reply as she asked in a guiding manner, "You seem to have witnessed the destruction of hope."

"Heh." There was a self-deprecating scoff sounding from the wall behind Audrey. "Indeed, I once thought that I had family. Later, I realized that it was only an extravagant hope of mine."

"Why do you say that?" Audrey asked like she was having a casual chat.

Gehrman Sparrow fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "Have you heard of those fairy tales that Emperor Roselle used for bringing up children?"

"Those are my childhood memories," Audrey acknowledged.

At the same time, she discovered that Mr. World's emotions were clearly stirred on the other side of the wall. Repressed pain was surging out. This time, Audrey didn't use Placate. Her spiritual intuition and professional knowledge told her that he needed to vent it out.

"Then you should know of Sleeping Beauty and her prince," Gehrman Sparrow said with a soft, hoarse voice. "There’s one such person who also entered a deep sleep until he suddenly woke up one day… He believes that his family is still around, and he works hard to improve himself, hoping that he can one day find them. This becomes his main driving force in life. Finally, he realized that he has slept for at least three hundred years, or even more than a thousand years, perhaps even longer. He can never find anything that he once had any more…”

The intense pain and sense of loss was extremely clear to Audrey. She came to a realization.

The gloomy, restrained, experienced, and ruthless Mr. World also has his own goals and reason for existing!

This is in line with his gentle heart… How pitiful… Although he was giving an example using a fairy tale, some of the emotions he felt when saying certain words reflect reality… When he mentioned "deep sleep," "family," "three hundred years," "more than a thousand years," "even longer," "never find," his pain clearly increased… This means that he’s from an ancient time and has lived to this day due to certain encounters? This matches the situation of Mr. Fool being an awakening ancient god. It’s no wonder he became his Blessed… Audrey quickly grasped the key to the matter.

She pursed her lips and pondered for a moment.

"Did his family say anything? Did they say what they wanted him to do when he wakes up?"

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CHAPTER 948
MEANING OF EXISTENCE

From Audrey’s point of view, Mr. World’s current situation wasn’t him suffering from a mental illness, nor was it close to pushing him to the state of losing control. It was because his goal in life and the meaning to his existence had been destroyed. It left him with a psychological barrier that just needed some guidance. Once she helped him set up a short-term goal, allowing him to find meaning in life, the problem would slowly be resolved.

In the serene and silent darkness, Audrey heard Gehrman Sparrow answer in a deep voice across the wall, "No."

As expected… Audrey wasn’t surprised as she asked, "Then did he search for his family’s last words? Did he search for their grave? Did he try to figure out the reason for the deep sleep?"

The Spirit Body behind the wall seemed to vanish for a few seconds as there wasn’t a single sound. After a moment, the hoarse voice continued:

"No, not yet."

Not yet… That means that it’s a possibility in the future? Audrey felt relieved as she clearly felt that Gehrman Sparrow’s emotional state wasn’t as heavy and gloomy as before, without any interest in anything. He had a certain level of drive and a tiny sense of urgency. He was just still in a state of confusion.

Taking this opportunity, Audrey cast Placate again. The effects were much better than before. At the very least, she believed that Mr. World had used

this impetus to escape from the abyss of gloominess and depression, returning to a normal person’s disheartened state.

Following that, Audrey didn’t press on regarding how he could find clues or investigate, because this could bring about some resistance. She nodded in the dark room in a natural manner and said, "Yes, there are many things to do, and many things that need amending! Perhaps you will have the chance of meeting someone from the same bloodline? Perhaps a family member of his hasn’t died from age, or had ended up living to this day due to some reason? The reason why there’s meaning to life is because of its infinite possibilities.

"In the process of searching, make sure to not miss out on your surroundings. Life isn’t just a one-way street. There are many branches and alleys. If only the former exists, how boring would it be. You should know how to approach it, to broaden your horizons, and to discover…”

Trying hard to recall all the suitable words she read in books, Audrey suddenly thought of something as her voice softened significantly.

"Also, don’t wear that thick mask."

The thinner and transparent ones don’t matter because everyone wears a mask when interacting with others. No one likes to directly express one’s relatively private secrets to others. It’s both a way to protect oneself and also a way to respect others… When Mr. World has a certain number of friends, a new meaning in life will naturally be formed… Audrey added inwardly, but she ultimately didn’t say it out loud. She believed that it might even backfire.

Unsurprisingly, Gehrman Sparrow fell silent again, seemingly still in confusion.

After a few seconds, a voice that wasn’t that hoarse sounded again:

"Thank you for straightening me out, and for your treatment."

"No, this is all a result of the strength inside you," Audrey replied seriously.

She cast a final Placate to confirm that Mr. World’s mental state was back to normal and that it wouldn’t relapse.

She then heard Gehrman Sparrow say, "Let’s end it here for today, okay?"

Audrey adjusted her tone and briskly replied, "Of course. It’s not a serious problem. I can do another follow-up whenever you’re free next week.

"Also, if it’s possible, make some medicine to stabilize your mental state. Take it for seven consecutive days. The ingredients are 10 grams of chamomile powder, 5 grams of rosemary powder, 10 milliliters of lemon balm extract… During this period, don’t reduce your consumption of desserts, and try to relax yourself in an appropriate manner…”

In the dark and silent room, she propped herself against the wall with her hands and slowly stood up.

At this moment, Gehrman Sparrow’s voice passed through the wall:

"What’s the consultation fee?"

Audrey held one hand to the wall and turned her head in thought.

"Wait till I get the potion formula for Sequence 5 of the Spectator pathway. I might need you to help me find the ingredients.

"If the Psychology Alchemists provides me with the ingredients, hmm…”

She curled the ends of her lips and said, "When you return from the Southern Continent to Backlund, remember to bring me some of the local produce as a

gift."

A super luxurious and light transportation coffin that’s carried by eight people? On the other side of the wall, Klein had the inexplicable urge to lampoon. He then stood up while clinging to the wall and sent Miss Justice back to the real world.

With a wave of his hand, the room vanished. He returned to the seat of honor at the long bronze table and sat at the seat belonging to The Fool.

In front of him, there were the Black Emperor, Tyrant, and Red Priest Cards of Blasphemy on the right. On the left, there was the Creeping Hunger, which Leonard Mitchell had sent back via Miss Messenger Reinette Tinekerr.

"I owe Miss Messenger 10,000 gold coins again…” Klein retracted his gaze and raised his right hand to rub his temples.

To prevent Ince Zangwill from escaping through the spirit world, he had already communicated with Reinette Tinekerr before he made plans for the murder. She was in charge of chasing away all the spirit world creatures around Revival Square, in exchange for that very same 10,000 gold coins.

The only thing that caught him by surprise was that 0-08 was more terrifying than he imagined. With Ince Zangwill suffering from Deity’s Curse, and with King of Angels Adam having drained it, its first attempt was able to "attract" an unknown creature which could pass through Reinette Tinekerr’s seal. If not for Daly Simone’s forceful spirit channeling and signing a pact, Ince Zangwill might very well have escaped.

Of course, while under Deity’s Curse, even if Ince Zangwill were to successfully escape, there was a high chance of him encountering other misfortunes, such as being thrown by the unknown creature to somewhere more dangerous or having it directly cause him harm. However, that wasn’t within Klein’s control.

At the thought that he was 10,000 gold coins in debt again, Klein felt a headache, but his mental state was a lot better.

After seeing the cocoon above the gray cloud, and the door of light beyond the staircase of light, he had suffered a shock that was as though a river had broken through its banks. He felt that all his expectations had been shattered. His mature world view, outlook on life, and values had crumbled as a result, causing his entire being to fall into a turbid state, as though he were a walking zombie.

Thankfully, he still had the innate desire to live and had sought out his private psychiatrist, Miss Justice Audrey, in time for treatment.

Phew… Klein exhaled and forced himself to turn his thoughts towards the cocoons. And from the scene he saw, his first reaction was:

An extremely high-level existence or Sealed Artifact had used different means to grab a large group of people from Earth at the same moment in time. Here, there were people who used the luck enhancement ritual, others bought strange silver plates, or had their phones hit by some strange virus…

Then, these transmigrators had their souls sealed inside the cocoon and were left hanging above the door of light, awaiting a particular opportunity before being sent to the real world.

Based on Klein’s observation, the door of light didn’t have any intelligence. It was operating based on pure instinct. This also meant that as long as the conditions were met, it would catalyze a cocoon and deliver the soul inside to a specific target’s body.

Based on the current circumstances, Klein guessed that there were probably two conditions that needed to be met.

First, there mustn’t be any other transmigrators prior, or the transmigrator had already been deemed to have failed or died. Second, the "calling out" of a certain object, item, or ritual. For instance, Klein Moretti had followed the Antigonus family’s notebook to perform that dark divination.

As for the rest, it’s impossible to know. Unless I can find the corresponding content in Emperor Roselle’s diary… Putting together everything that I know, my current theory should be very close to the truth. This will make it easy to explain why, despite being from the same era as the emperor on Earth with less than a year in between us, our entry into the real world was separated by slightly more than two hundred years… It’s because we transmigrated at the same time, but we were "released" in different eras! Before entering the real world, who knows how long we’ve been asleep for… A brother from next door? Klein leaned back into his chair as his eyes shimmered before turning gloomy again.

This was a hypothesis he came up with based on the conditions of the door of light, his situation, and the emperor’s diary.

Of course, this didn’t mean that there weren’t other possibilities. At present, Klein was just unable to find evidence to support them. For example, a cocoon might represent the life of a transmigrator, but this was in contradiction with Klein’s own recovery or the lack of change in his Spirit Body.

And if his hypothesis wasn’t too different from the truth, it meant that he had left Earth, transmigrating over for at least two hundred years or even thousands of years. Even if he found the way and method to go back to Earth, he was unable to return to the place he called home.

Compared to the gap in distance, the barrier of time left him in greater despair.

This was the reason why it caused Klein’s mental state to instantly collapse. "Returning home" was always his ultimate goal.

Miss Justice is right. There are still many questions to resolve and to probe… What’s the meaning behind hanging so many transmigrators behind the door of light? What goal does it have? Who set up everything back then? How many people were pulled in here? Where has the other

person gone to? The Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth? Klein tried hard to engross himself in thinking, so as to find a new goal for the future.

Unfortunately, he was only able to approach the door of light and not touch it. He was unable to touch it, grasp it, or even carefully inspect it. He had no means to do any studies to receive any direct information.

I should consider finding clues from the real world… Also, since reaching Sequence 4 allows me to reach that gray cloud and see the door of light, will there be another qualitative change at Sequence 2? Will I be able to gain control over the door of light when that happens, allowing me to figure out the truth?

Heh heh, I was affected by the Seven Lights, the Goddess, and Arrodes's attitude. I almost imagined myself to be the real owner of the gray fog, and believe that I'm some great master above the spirit world. Now, from the looks of it, I'm just a "test subject" that was randomly thrown down. Once I fail, the next transmigrator will appear… Klein thought as he tapped the edge of the long bronze table.

He was rather curious of another point. Three broken "cocoons," with one representing himself, and another representing the emperor, so who was the third one?

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CHAPTER 949
DIRECTION OF INVESTIGATIONS

Klein’s first target of suspicion was undoubtedly Elf King Soniathrym. This ancient god had created chopsticks, made blood cakes, enjoyed eating animal innards, and was good at using spices for cooking. "His" descendants had facial features, hair color, and eyes that resembled Asians on Earth. Not only did Klein suspect that "He" was a transmigrator, even Emperor Roselle shared his feelings.

Of course, after a deeper level of investigations, Roselle had ruled out that hypothesis from their language, symbols, traditional proverbs, and other facets. Klein believed that using chopsticks as cutlery, the preference for eating innards, and using spices wasn’t an exclusive trait. To a species that enjoyed nature, it was possible for these to gradually appear in their daily life!

As for why elves who wielded the Sailor pathway were close to nature, Klein didn’t know why. It was just something as described by the murals and texts they left behind.

I for one felt that the Elf King is unlikely to be a transmigrator, but after seeing the three shattered cocoons, I can’t be too sure… Perhaps "He" might be a fellow countryman… Hmm, I can’t rule out the possibility that this ancient god isn’t a transmigrator but that one of the high-ranking elves around "Him" is one. This can also allow the tradition to pass down in the name of the Elf King… Klein tapped his fingers as he thought silently.

Almost at the same time, he had two directions for his investigation:

Groselle’s Travels had Elvish Songster, Siatas, who served Soniathrym’s queen, Queen of Calamity Cohinem!

As long as I enter her sea of collective subconscious, I should be able to see or make contact with the elves and find memory fragments regarding the ancient

god!

I can also use Hypnosis, directly allowing her subconscious to speak… But the problem is that I’m not good at such matters. The last time I attempted to delve into Groselle’s subconscious, I felt quick-tempered and could hardly calm down. Although I’m already a demigod, it also becomes more pressing that I resist the inclination towards madness and losing control. And I won’t be able to regulate my mental state for quite some time… Forcefully spirit channeling isn’t suitable for such a situation and for such a target… Klein frowned slightly. He felt that he might need a mystical item that was of a relatively high-level Sequence in the Spectator pathway, or an assistant that was at least a Hypnotist.

He began seriously considering the possibility of getting Miss Justice’s help. There’s no problem doing it. It’s not impossible to leave by entering as a Spirit Body above the gray fog…

I don’t have to worry that Miss Justice will pry into the secret of a transmigrator. As long as Siatas doesn’t have any knowledge of this, her subconscious and collective subconscious wouldn’t point towards such a conclusion. And I can find the desired clues in details so they don’t pay any notice…

The biggest problem is that Miss Justice has no adventuring experience and she lacks it. Entering the sea of subconscious of an ancient figure is very dangerous to her. There might be the remnants of an ancient god in there at any time… Once I don’t have the help of a Psychiatrist, I will also end up the same…

Even if I’m getting Miss Justice as support, I’ll have to wait until she reaches Sequence 5 so that she can use her level to make up for her lack of experience. When that happens, we can first attempt to hypnotize Siatas and see what we can learn from her mouth. If there’s nothing of value, we can consider entering her dream to delve deeper into her consciousness and step into that sea.

Yes, the Dream Charms I create now aren’t potent enough. I might not be able to maintain such a long exploration. Sigh, the Goddess won’t directly respond to such trivial matters. It’s a fixed feedback based on a fixed ritual… The corresponding Beyonder characteristics have been returned to the Church… Don’t tell me that I need to bring Leonard with me? I wonder if pulling someone at the Spirit Body level can avoid the notice of the grandpa inside him. I’ll do some research over the next few days…

Klein reined in his thoughts and considered his second target of suspicion.

This person didn’t seem too special in the past, nor did Klein believe that he was a transmigrator. But now that his mind calmed down, he began processing his thoughts and analyzing, Klein realized that many points that he viewed as common sense weren’t that simple on careful thought. They contained an unspeakable sense of horror.

He suspected: the ancient sun god, the City of Silver’s Creator!

The seven Church’s separate bibles have similarities to Earth’s Western religions… It is similarly the case for their Masses!

Based on Little Sun’s description, from what Emperor Roselle saw from Adam’s chapel, and the content of the murals in the Forsaken Land of the Gods, it’s clear that the ancient sun god’s main symbol is the cross!

"He" gave his children the names Adam and Amon…

The angels beneath "Him" all have wings of light. I’ve not seen that in the other pathways to date…

It’s unknown how "He" rose up. "He" suddenly appeared late in the Second Epoch, killed several ancient gods, and took "Their" various authorities…

I never thought much about these details in the past. It’s quite scary now that I think deeply of it. Klein drew a gasp as he began feeling more convinced that it was the ancient sun god instead of Elf King Soniathrym.

"His" experiences were just too legendary, more of a protagonist of an era than Emperor Roselle!

Of course, "His" outcome was rather tragic, becoming a feast for "His" Kings of Angels. Emperor Roselle was also tragic but in no way as terrible.

Doesn’t this imply Amon’s and Adam’s attitude in a certain sense? "They" believe that the gray fog is related to "Their" father, but due to "Their" different pathways, they made different choices? Hmm, there’s a certain chance that Adam can’t see the gray fog. "He" isn’t a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Fate, Marauder, Seer, and Apprentice pathways… Klein nodded slightly.

Based on these clues, he also had a direction of investigation that didn’t require him to make contact with major figures at the angel level.

In Groselle’s Travels lived Ascetic Snowman who survived the Third Epoch and had served the ancient sun god!

The problem circles back to itself… There’s nothing to doubt about the rest for the time being. Klein slowly exhaled, reached out his right hand, and picked up the newly obtained Card of Blasphemy: Red Priest card!

Infusing his spirituality into it, the card produced a blood-red light, forming a palm-sized illusory book.

The pages of the book flipped, presenting portraits of a lifelike Roselle Gustav. He was either wearing a hunter’s attire, raising his middle finger,

walking through a burning building, or standing behind a trap. He had all sorts of attires and was doing all kinds of things.

Sequence 9: Hunter… Sequence 8: Provoker… Sequence 7: Pyromaniac… Sequence 6: Conspirer… Sequence 5: Reaper… Sequence 4: Iron-blooded Knight… Sequence 3: War Bishop… Sequence 2: Weather Warlock… Sequence 1: Conqueror… Sequence 0: Red Priest… Klein’s gaze swept past the different portraits on the tarot card and imprinted the content into his mind.

He wasn’t surprised at this pathway’s Sequence o’s ritual to become a god. This was because Hermes had once told Roselle that the "red" in Red Priest meant the red of war.

Therefore, when he saw "stirring up a war that sweeps an entire continent and gain victory," he wasn’t stirred at all.

After flipping the Red Priest card, he began thinking about problems and felt his mental state improve. He rubbed his temples, finally feeling exhausted.

I should set a short-term goal and investigate the person behind the Great Smog of Backlund. This is something that I’ve yet to complete. Yes, I should continue the arms deal according to my original plans, and return to Backlund after receiving the money. Now, there are two clues. First, the captain of the royal guards, Viscount Stratford, and the other is MI9’s deputy director, Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor… Klein tried to pull himself up and decided to occupy himself with something.

Before leaving the gray fog, he threw the mental medicine recipe that Miss Justice had given him to the crimson star representing The Moon Emlyn. He requested this vampire, who was good at making it, to make a week’s worth at 1 pound a bottle.

Backlund, within the Odora family’s villa.

Emlyn White, who was waiting in the activity room, curled his lips and thought to himself, A transaction that’s just 7 pounds. I really don’t want to do it… The World can concoct it himself if he’s a little careful.

He hadn’t objected to The World’s request, because after spending 5,000 pounds to buy the Sequence 5 Vampire Beyonder characteristic, he only had 730 pounds left.

At this moment, Cosmi walked over, looking like a middle-aged gentleman.

After exchanging a bow, the Sanguine Baron asked, "Emlyn, why are you suddenly here?"

Emlyn immediately felt a little guilty before recalling his previous experiences of conversing with The Hanged Man and The World. He tipped his chin slightly and answered in a seemingly casual manner, "I’ve received a Sequence 5 Scarlet Scholar Beyonder characteristic. I wonder when we can begin the ritual to make me a Viscount."

Cosmi was taken aback as he asked in surprise, "You obtained a Scarlet Scholar Beyonder characteristic?"

Emlyn glanced at him and nodded with a faint smile.

"That’s right."

He didn’t explain how he had obtained the Beyonder characteristic, as though Cosmi wasn’t worthy of knowing

Cosmi turned agape as he fell silent. After a few seconds, he said, "Wait till the next full moon."

He paused and said, "I happen to have something for you.

"My grandfather wishes to inform you that an important figure will be coming to Backlund. ‘He’ wishes to meet you."

"He"? Emlyn’s pupils dilated instantly.

The ancient ones of the Sanguine that lived since the Second Epoch to this day, together with the Grade o Sealed Artifacts, all of those important existences at the angel level didn’t exceed five in number!

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CHAPTER 950
KEEPING SECRETS

Emlyn fell silent for two seconds as he lowered his chin and asked, "Who… is it?"

To him, angels were naturally worthy of respect, but those who could truly make him bow his head were the important figures addressed as "He" by every Sanguine. "They" had witnessed and experienced the Sanguine's long history, the source of his pride.

"I'm not sure. But in short, I'll notify you when the time comes." Cosmi Odora shook his head.

…The person is coming because of the Ancestor's revelation? There are subsequent instructions? Why doesn't the Ancestor directly give me a revelation? This will be better concealed. I'm "Her" chosen one! This is to avoid agitating Mr. Fool? Questions flashed past Emlyn's mind as he answered them himself.

He didn't speak further as he wore his top hat and left Odora's villa.

When he arrived at the door, he looked at the thin clouds that could hardly block out the sun. Emlyn curled his lips in disdain, raised his hand to press down on his hat, and ran for a rental carriage at the end of the street as he inwardly mumbled, Such weather really isn't suitable for heading out!

The medicine that The World wants isn't rare. It can be concocted in fifteen minutes… Hmm, the ingredients I ordered previously should be in by today. I can carry out the transaction with Miss Magician that I've delayed for days…

Backlund, Cherwood Borough.

Fors placed glass bottles on an altar and looked at the light blue and golden liquids, feeling the exhilaration from shopping. More enticing than a cocktail. I wonder what it tastes like. Putting some ice in might make it taste better… Seriously, what am I thinking? These are all medicine! Fors sputtered at herself and hurriedly cleaned up the room.

Upon receiving the medicine required for medical treatment, she finished her preparations for heading to the abandoned castle in Delaire Forest. She was just waiting for Xio to return!

After tidying up certain matters, Fors slumped onto the sofa and casually picked up a few newspaper copies and began planning her itinerary for the day.

Set off at dusk. Dinner will probably be when we arrive at the town bordering the forest…

Amidst her silent mumbling, Fors flipped to the copy of News At Sea.

Suddenly, her gaze froze as a familiar name was reflected in her eyes: "Gehrman Sparrow!"

This adventurer had appeared at sea again, boarding the Black Tulip with a middle-aged name known as "Death Consul." He killed Admiral Hell Ludwell, changing the lineup of the seven pirate admirals again.

ILIL

Fors subconsciously patted her chest, unsure what she was happy about.

At that instant, she had a baffling feeling that Gehrman Sparrow’s experiences were sufficiently legendary, something that could definitely be written into a novel!

Unfortunately, he’s not someone who’s easy to get along with; otherwise, I can totally be a part-time biographer to write a book for him… Haha, if I were to write the book titled "Gehrman Sparrow," I’ll definitely be targeted by the official Beyonders… Fors thought in amusement before hearing the lock turn.

She looked up and saw Xio pushing open the door and entering the living room.

"You’re early?" Fors asked in surprise.

Xio ruffled the right side of her blonde hair and said, "I met with MI9 again and received a mission."

"What is it?" Fors sat up, asking out of curiosity.

Xio casually threw herself onto the single-seater.

"Investigate the background of the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow.

"Based on the information provided by MI9, he’s a terrifying Beyonder, and the name he uses is fake. Even his identification documents are fake. He probably came from Backlund.

"They suspect that Gehrman Sparrow has another identity and partners here."

Upon hearing the word "partners," Fors couldn’t help but twitch the corners of her mouth. She had the urge to tell Xio that MI9’s guess was right. Gehrman Sparrow’s partner was sitting directly opposite her.

She coughed slightly and acted calm while she asked, "Why are you investigating Gehrman Sparrow’s background?

"What did he do this time?"

Xio glanced at the stack of newspapers beside Fors.

"Haven’t you read today’s News at Sea?

"Gehrman Sparrow killed Admiral Hell Ludwell and is now known as the strongest adventurer of the Five Seas.

"By the way, MI9 also told me that Gehrman Sparrow might very well believe in the secret existence known as The Fool. This is news that came from many different sources, including the Aurora Order and the Rose School of Thought."

I can testify to that… They are right… Fors forced a smile and said, "Sounds rather dangerous."

"Yeah." Xio nodded. "I only plan on gathering the intel and not delving too deep into it."

Fors didn’t continue on this topic as she said, "I’ve already prepared the medicine. Shall we head to Delaire Forest today?"

Xio had already become a Sequence 7 Interrogator a few days ago, and she had mastered a rather useful power, Psychic Piercing.

"Alright." Xio stood up, showcasing how she was a woman of action. "Let’s set off now."

"Ah? Let’s wait a little longer. I was thinking dusk…” Fors replied, feeling a little resistant.

She often wished to procrastinate until the last moment.

Before long, she was pulled out of their rented apartment by Xio while bringing all kinds of items along. They got a rental carriage and headed for the metro.

Amidst the sonorous whistle of the steam engine, the massive steam locomotive hauled its meandering body and entered the platform. Under the illumination of the wall lamps on both sides, it stopped

Fors and Xio stood outside a carriage and waited patiently for the passengers to alight.

Suddenly, they saw two Red Gloves.

The owner of the Red Gloves was a man in his thirties. He wore a white shirt with a black trench coat. His collar was raised up high, covering his chin and mouth.

He had a pair of dark-green eyes with golden-brown sideburns. He held a silver chest that was big enough to put a tiny violin in it.

Fors and Xio exchanged looks as they lowered their gaze, staring at their toes.

As a high-ranking deacon of the Church of Evernight’s Nighthawks, one of the twenty-two members of power in the Church, and one of the three bigwigs of the Red Gloves, Crestet Cesimir wasn’t someone who cared about parading himself around. He enjoyed traveling alone, taking the transportation that commoners took, making him appear like an ordinary clergyman.

After transferring to another line, he eventually arrived in North Borough. He then took a rental carriage and headed straight for Saint Samuel Cathedral where he met Backlund diocese’s archbishop, Saint Anthony Stevenson.

After greeting each other and praising the Goddess, Cesimir found a seat and said, "I’ll be troubling you to provide me with some help for the next couple weeks."

The clean-shaved archbishop, Anthony, in his black robe with red accents sat down as well. He deliberated before asking, "Is it something to do with Ince Zangwill?".

"Yes." Cesimir nodded slightly. "The Holy See wishes that I inform you that another servant of the Goddess, the matron of the Evernight cloister, Ma’am Arianna, will be in Backlund not long from now."

This ascetic was ranked first among all the thirteen archbishops.

Without waiting for Saint Anthony’s inquiry, he explained in detail, "Ma’am Ilya learned plenty of important information from Ince Zangwill’s remnant spirit, including his mental problems that 0-08 used to escape, as well as the details of his cooperation with the royal family and the Demoness Sect…

"After machinating the Great Smog of Backlund, Ince Zangwill was betrayed by 0-08 and had ended up being possessed by the Red Angel evil spirit. He headed for the Southern Continent alone in an attempt to set up a trap to hunt Ma’am Ilya.

"An important point to take note of is, that in Ince Zangwill’s memories, there is a very important underground ruin. It’s in the northwestern outskirts of Backlund, an area just before the Tussock River flows in.

"My mission is to find that ruin."

Saint Anthony finished listening in silence before asking in thought, "Ince Zangwill doesn’t know of the exact location?

"He has never been there before?"

Cesimir shook his head.

"He had entered, but he was led in there and didn’t grasp the required key information."

Saint Anthony tersely acknowledged before asking, "Have you figured out which batch of people from the royal family that Ince Zangwill was working with?"

"No." Crestet Cesimir paused and continued, "Based on normal logic, regardless of whether the partners donned disguises, if they meet, there should be the corresponding memory fragments, but inside Ince Zangwill's Spirit Body, there were no traces of that. It was as though it never existed."

"Perhaps it's an influence of a deed. The source of the deed's power that even a Sequence 4 demigod can't resist is something worth paying attention to." Saint Anthony nodded very slightly.

He thought and said, "The telegram didn't include much. I do not know the exact sequence of events. Who exactly killed Ince Zangwill?"

Crestet Cesimir exhaled slowly and said, "A name you might never believe, Klein Moretti."

"The Nighthawk who died in the line of duty during the Tingen incident?" Anthony's wrinkles deepened.

"Yes, that's what Ilya sent back. No one knows how Klein Moretti, who was only a Sequence 8, had resurrected, or how he could kill Ince Zangwill, a demigod wielding 0-08…" Upon saying this, Cesimir's expression turned somewhat odd. "The Holy See requests us to strictly keep this intel confidential. We are not to divulge this to anyone who isn't an archbishop or high-ranking deacon. Furthermore, we are not to pursue Klein Moretti, pretending as though he's still in his grave."

Saint Anthony fell silent for a few seconds as though he recalled something trivial. He nodded and said, "Perhaps, he's a Blessed of the Goddess…"

Cesimir suddenly looked up at Saint Anthony as though he was a lunatic.

His lips quivered, but he ultimately didn't say a word.

Anthony didn’t continue the topic as he looked at the door and said sternly, "Your mission might need plenty of investigations. This requires enough manpower. Hmm, Soest’s team has completed their mission in the Southern Continent. I’ll get them to return quickly and follow your instructions."

"Alright." Crestet Cesimir didn’t put up any objections.

"Rest for the remainder of the day before returning to Backlund?" Leonard looked up at team captain, Soest.

Soest looked pitifully at Leonard, who had been silent for quite some time, and nodded.

"That’s right."

After watching this Spirit Warlock leave his room, Leonard sighed and leaned against the wall.

At this moment, dark red light surged out from before his eyes, enveloping him completely without any prior warning.

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CHAPTER 951
DRAWING A CARD

By the time Leonard reacted, he saw numerous towering stone pillars, as well as a towering palace that looked like a giant's residence above the endless grayish-white fog that was being propped up by these stone pillars.

His green eyes wore a blank look. After a second, Leonard found himself sitting on a high-back chair beside a long mottled bronze table at some point in time. Beside him and opposite him were high-back chairs that exuded solemnity.

And at the end of the long mottled table, where the seat of honor was, a figure was shrouded in thick gray fog. The figure was leaning into his seat leisurely, as though he was overlooking everything.

When this figure appeared in Leonard's eyes, he felt as though he was on a liner, seeing a bottomless abyss whose boundaries were nowhere to be seen. It also felt like he had left the city and was on the outskirts, looking up to see lofty mountains that tore through the clouds.

Instantly, many thoughts flashed through Leonard's mind. He had a rough guess as to what he was experiencing. As a Beyonder of the Church, a believer who knew that deities truly exist, he wasn't able to resist his feelings. He subconsciously wished to leave his seat and prostrate before the existence before him.

The might of a deity was boundless!

Just as Leonard stood up, he was pressed down by an invisible force. A slow and calm voice resonated in his ears:

"There’s no need for such trouble.

"You can call me Mr. Fool."

The Fool… Indeed… Leonard’s fear of the unknown had settled immediately. Although he was still worried about what would happen next, he wasn’t that perturbed any longer. He didn’t sit uneasily with a dry mouth and parched lips.

He got up halfway, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, why did you summon me here?"

As an experienced Nighthawk and a Red Glove who had participated in major cases, Leonard knew how dangerous it was to establish a connection with a secret existence. He knew that he had slid down the edge of the abyss and had no chance of redemption.

At that moment when he decided to chant The Fool’s honorific name, he was able to foresee his tragic end. But for revenge, he had made the choice regardless.

However, everyone had the instinct to survive. Recalling how Klein Moretti, who believed in The Fool, was still alive and had even become a demigod, Leonard couldn’t help but hold out some hope and expectations.

At this moment, he heard the fog-enshrouded Fool chuckle.

"Since you prayed to me for help, then based on the principle of equivalent exchange, you definitely need to pay the price."

Leonard’s body trembled as he bowed his head lower.

"What is it you wish?"

After a brief pause, The Fool’s voice sounded again:

"There’s no rush. Perhaps there will be something that requires you to provide help to certain people.

"Have a seat."

Leonard slowly calmed himself down and sat. He looked around and asked, "He… Klein Moretti… has been here like me?"

The Fool’s said with a calm tone, "In a different manner."

Different manner… Indeed, Klein didn’t enter because he chanted the honorific name. He had been introduced by that Death Consul named Azik Eggers before becoming one of Mr. Fool’s faithful… Leonard couldn’t help but survey the area, and he discovered that there were a total of twenty-two high-back chairs around the long mottled table.

It corresponds to the twenty-two Beyonder pathways. There are also twenty-two tarot cards… The Fool… Just as Leonard came up with a theory, he heard Mr. Fool chuckle.

"Other than you, there are other living beings that have been pulled in here for various reasons.

"They earnestly wished for me to convene a gathering to carry out the exchange of information and the transaction of materials and formulas. They also help each other. This allows them to rapidly advance, eventually becoming High-Sequence Beyonders."

This is a little different from the secret organization represented by tarot cards I had imagined. It’s rather loosely organized… What motives does Mr. Fool have to agree to such a request? After coming to the ancient palace above the gray fog, Leonard felt high-strung, causing his thought processes to be a lot more agile than usual. He came up with all kinds of questions.

After successfully achieving revenge, he had been feeling low-spirited and empty for a moment, as though he had lost his goal in life. However, he

quickly pulled himself together. This was because Daly’s death told him that he wasn’t strong enough. To reduce the number of casualties of his companions in future missions and so as to not lack the ability to save them, he needed to reach Sequence 4 at the very least. He needed to become a demigod.

Therefore, The Fool’s words had stirred his heart. He felt that it was an opportunity. Meanwhile, he also believed that by joining the gathering, he could deeply understand the situation of the secret organization. It helped in maximally averting the danger that resulted from establishing contact with The Fool.

After some deliberation, Leonard asked, "Klein Moretti is also a regular member of this gathering?

"Does he have a seat here?"

The Fool replied without much concern, "Yes."

Leonard fell silent for a second as he asked, "Honorable Mr. Fool, can I join this regular gathering?"

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool said with a smile, "Sure.

"But when you return, remember to mention this to Pallez Zoroast about it. Do not attempt to hide it from ‘Him."

"Him”…Old Man really is an angel! It’s no wonder the Luck Siphon charm is so magical… Although Leonard had already expected this, he still couldn’t help but be alarmed after receiving confirmation from Mr. Fool.

He hesitated for a moment and said, "Why must I tell Pallez Zoroast?"

Although he had a good relationship with Pallez Zoroast and had established a certain level of trust, he still felt wary. The reason why he had

made the request to join Mr. Fool’s secret gathering was to balance the latent danger of the ancient Parasite.

He then heard Mr. Fool reply with a smile, "Many a time, striking fear is a lot more useful than conflict."

Striking fear is a lot more useful than conflict… That’s right, forcefully creating a balance might agitate Old Man. Regardless, the final battlefield will be in my body, and it would be extremely disadvantageous to me. By striking fear into "Him," I can get "Him" to recognize the situation. Even if "He" has ill intent, "He" will think of another solution and take another path… Leonard bowed his head in enlightenment.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I have no more questions."

At the end of the long bronze table, The Fool conjured a deck of tarot cards and lifted up his hand and pointed at them.

"They have each selected a tarot card to represent their code name. You can also choose one.

"The deck has the cards of their respective owners taken away."

They do use tarot cards are as their code names… Leonard exhaled and couldn’t help but ask again, "Which card is Klein Moretti?"

"The World," The Fool said casually. "It’s him, and also not him."

What does that mean… Leonard didn’t dare to ask further. He extended his right hand and pulled out a card from the deck of tarot cards.

Flipping it over, he saw a goddess pouring holy water, with stars littering the background.

The Star card!

This didn’t match Leonard’s taste, but since he had already completed the ritual under Mr. Fool’s watch, he could only accept it.

"Return. The gathering happens every Monday at three in the afternoon, Backlund time." Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool raised his hand and made Leonard, who was rushing to bow, vanish from the ancient palace.

The Fool Klein chuckled as he flipped all the tarot cards.

All of them had the same picture with the same sky-filled stars.

All of them were The Star cards!

After laughing for a while, Klein cast his gaze to the crimson star that represented Leonard.

While attempting to pull the poet above the gray fog, he had made some careful observation and had discovered that there was a blob of light hiding in Leonard Mitchell’s body. It seemed to be made of countless ringed worms, hidden deep inside his Soul Body.

This made Klein confirm that Pallez Zoroast had only parasitized Leonard at a preliminary stage. "He" didn’t control Leonard’s Body of Heart and Mind, Astral Projection, Ether Body, and physical body. And after advancing to become a demigod, Klein had gained a deeper control over the mysterious space above the gray fog, allowing him to pull in anyone he wanted, without targeting the soul. He could make a selection.

Therefore, Klein decided to not touch Leonard’s Soul Body, and only pulled his Astral Projection above the gray fog. This avoided agitating Pallez Zoroast or end up bringing "Him" into the mysterious space. Of course, it was almost certain that the Sequence 1 angel of the Marauder pathway would notice it.

And the ability to enter the dreams of others stemmed from the Astral Projection of Beyonders of the Evernight pathway, so it didn’t affect

Leonard’s ability to do what he was good at in this mysterious space.

Let’s hope that he can escape from Pallez Zoroast’s parasitizing bit by bit… Klein suddenly sighed.

The reason why he made Leonard join the tarot club was because he wished to help this former teammate grow stronger, allowing him to escape the claws of Pallez Zoroast.

If that Marauder pathway angel didn’t have any ill intent, he could get Leonard to help "Him" hide from Amon and aid "His" recovery. This would speed up "His" switching of parasitic targets.

Retracting in his gaze, Klein thought for a moment. He threw the Hunter pathway’s Sequence 6 Conspirer potion formula to the point of light representing Danitz. He then instructed him to leave the Southern Continent and return to the Golden Dream.

Black Hunting Spider’s composite eye, sphinx’s brain… Danitz recalled the content he had just "seen" in a daze as he stood up in delight.

He planned to immediately bid farewell to Anderson and leave the dangerous Southern Continent.

After coming to the door of the Fog Sea’s Strongest Hunter, he knocked on the wooden door, only to see it open.

Anderson hadn’t locked the door!

Danitz was puzzled as he cast his gaze inside and saw Anderson holding a knife and sliding it against his abdomen.

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CHAPTER 952
WHAT A SMALL WORLD

Danitz jumped in fright as he blurted out, "Sorry, I didn’t see anything…” Before he could finish his sentence, he had already pulled the door handle towards him.

Bang!

The door closed, emitting a sound that echoed through the corridor.

At this point, Danitz finally came to a realization.

What was I doing just now…

What is Anderson doing?

He instinctively removed the black boxing glove and thought bitterly with a frown. Finally, he decided to return to his room, pack his luggage, and leave.

As for what Anderson was trying to do, he felt that something was amiss despite his curiosity. He had no plans on getting himself involved in it, lest he fell into a trap.

Captain said that I should maintain fear and respect towards the unknown. So, I should distance myself from this… Just as Danitz turned around, he suddenly heard the door unlock before being opened.

Anderson, whose buttons on the lower part of his shirt weren’t buttoned up, walked out with a dull, pitch-black knife. He looked at Danitz with a mixed

expression.

"Aren’t you going to try to stop me?"

Danitz acutely noticed the chance to mock him as he sniggered.

"That’s your freedom.

"If you didn’t leave a will, I’ll be rich!"

Anderson rubbed his cheeks.

"Aren’t you curious about what I encountered?"

Danitz glanced at him suspiciously.

"I keep feeling as though you’re up to something."

Anderson roared with laughter.

"Well, I had been captured some time ago and was soaked in strange blood with all kinds of ingredients. I was corroded by it for an extended period of time until a strange chrysalis was formed inside my body. This was to create the effect of having a certain level of attraction towards High-Sequence Beyonders of the Hunter pathway."

As he spoke, he pointed at his abdomen.

Danitz was taken aback.

"I’ve never really heard of something like that.

"If you were another sex, I might’ve imagined that you’re pregnant…”

He paused for a moment before asking, "That strange fellow in Revival Square was attracted by the baby, no— ‘chrysalis’ in your stomach?"

Anderson nodded as Danitz gestured with his hands.

"You were trying to cut open your abdomen to extract the ‘chrysalis’?"

Anderson replied honestly, "Yes, I’m worried about how it would affect me, or if it will continue attracting demigods. I have to make every second count to remove this latent problem."

Danitz thought before asking in puzzlement, "Then why aren’t you making the attempt?

"You forgot to set up a will, and you want me to be your witness?"

Anderson’s facial muscles twitched as he chuckled.

"Not bad. Your Provoker potion should almost be digested."

He then sighed.

"After some careful analysis, I believe there’s no direct way to extract it. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have soaked me in blood and allow the ingredients to seep into me. They could’ve just opened up my stomach and placed the chrysalis inside before sewing me up."

Without waiting for Danitz’s reply, he said in thought, "Don’t you have the method to contact Gehrman Sparrow? He’s been through so much and knows so much, so I would like to consult him on how to resolve this problem."

In recent months, Danitz was extremely afraid of people raising the matter about him knowing Gehrman Sparrow, so he subconsciously retorted, "No! I haven’t seen him since I left the Golden Dream!"

Anderson curled the corner of his lips and said, "When you were writing to Gehrman Sparrow, I was beside him and have met his messenger."

Danitz’s expression immediately froze. He forced a smile after a few seconds.

"Then why don’t you directly summon his messenger?"

Anderson raised his hand again and touched his throat, chuckling.

"I don’t know the ritual for summoning his messenger."

Danitz still suspected that Anderson was up to something, and was unwilling to confirm that he had been repeatedly communicating with Gehrman Sparrow. He then suggested, "Actually, you can always seek the help of our captain on such matters. She’s very knowledgeable and good at research. She knows many secret techniques and can also seek the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom for help. She should be able to give you the solution for resolving the matter of the chrysalis in your stomach.

"Haha, if you’re embarrassed, I can talk to her for you."

Just as he said that, he saw Anderson’s face beam. He quickly replied with a rushed tone, "Alright, let’s do that!

"I’ve already packed my luggage. When shall we set off?"

"…” Danitz fell into a daze for a few seconds, feeling that he had been tricked by Anderson.

He returned to the room, drank his remaining beer, and threw all the miscellaneous items into his luggage bag, leaving behind a dried leaf with golden patterns.

This was the token Danitz previously used to establish contact with the Northern State’s dominant leader, General Maysanchez. Following Gehrman Sparrow’s instructions, he left the leaf inside and allowed the person-in-charge to follow up.

In the room that Danitz checked out of, a candle was suddenly lit as a two-meter-tall scarlet flame burgeoned.

Amidst the flames, a figure walked out. He was wearing a silk top hat, black formal suit, and had white sideburns. He looked outstanding with his deep, blue eyes and mature demeanor. He was none other than Klein as Dwayne Dantès.

After picking up the leaf with golden patterns, Klein left the hotel, circling around the sealed-off Revival Square, and came to Cookawa's core region, White Feather Square.

Maysanchez's residence was there, located beside a Death cathedral that descended downwards.

As a standard Loenese gentleman, Dantès looked out of place when walking through the city. Here, the foreigners were a minority, with most foreigners seen around the few major embassies located around Rejoice Square. The other places were filled with mostly locals from Balam.

Their skin was slightly brown, and they had curly black hair. Their facial features were soft, and in the eyes of most people from the Northern Continent, people of the same sex all looked the same, aside from the differences in height and weight.

These locals, be it male or female, enjoyed rolling dried tobacco leaves into Balam cigarettes. Along the way, Klein would see residents spewing out smoke alongside the road from time to time.

In addition, many of them hung a fruit known as Dalawa by their waists.

This fruit was the size of two fists, with thick skin. After digging open a tiny hole and eating the flesh inside, one could use it to store water, alcohol, and other beverages.

Based on Klein’s observations, they mostly drank an orange-yellow Gwadar. It was sour with a hint of sweetness, good at quenching thirst and relieving heat. It was also great at keeping people awake.

I didn’t have a chance to try it before… Klein mumbled as he found the guard manning the general’s residence and sought to meet a man named Haggis.

Due to his appearance as a Loenese person and a gentleman, the guard didn’t deny his request or make it difficult for him. He got a person to head in to get a man in his thirties.

The man’s facial features and skin were that of a standard Balam native. However, his curly black hair had been pulled straight and neatly combed back as though he was trying to mimic members of high society in the various countries of the Northern Continent.

He wore a white shirt and a black vest, matched with a very formal bow tie. Upon seeing Dwayne Dantès, he said in standard Loenese, "Good afternoon, I’m Haggis. Nice to meet you."

His accent was a little odd, different from any borough in Loen.

Klein had lived in high society for quite a period of time, so he wasn’t too surprised. He said with a smile, "Good afternoon, I’m Dwayne Dantès. I never expected to meet a gentleman who’s so good at using the accent of Loenese nobles."

Haggis couldn’t help but smile.

"Many children of noble birth from Loen have one come to East and West Balam to seek out opportunities. I was fortunate to learn from them."

"Oh, I might know some of them." Klein wasn’t in a rush to talk business as he began making small talk with Haggis like a gentleman.

Haggis smiled.

"My friend includes Colonel Alfred Hall, the second son of an earl."

Hall… Klein let out a soft chuckle.

"I once met Earl Hall at a charity party. He’s a true noble.

"What a small world."

Haggis nodded in agreement.

"Perhaps this is an arrangement of fate. Unfortunately, Alfred was transferred to East Balam last year."

He didn’t continue as he immediately invited Dwayne Dantès into the general’s residence.

When passing through the side door, Klein suddenly looked up, glancing at the embedded stained glass above.

The glass shimmered like a rainbow under the illumination of sunlight, as though gazes were sweeping past.

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CHAPTER 953
PROPHECY

Klein retracted his gaze in a natural manner, held his gold-inlaid cane, and followed closely behind Haggis before entering the general’s residence.

The architecture style was completely unlike those found in the Southern Continent. It didn’t make any use of light manipulation to make the rooms appear dark and gloomy, nor did they boldly use some human bones as accessories to produce a strong visual impact. Instead, it was more in the style of the Northern Continent. Furthermore, there was an undeniable hint of Intis influence.

Every column was covered in segmented gold foil. The use of colors in the murals were warm, and there were sculptures embedded with gold. A beautiful spiral staircase descended from above, connecting all four stories before ending in the middle of the huge hall where it faced the entrance. It was extremely grand.

I have to say that countries led by the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun are really at the forefront when it comes to gold artwork. It doesn’t have the feeling of the gaudy nouveau riche… Klein swept his gaze to the palm-sized golden angels that extended out from the staircase’s railings and mid sections of the columns, holding back his urge to caress them.

Looking at the guards standing by the two sides, he casually found a topic and said to Haggis, "Colonel Alfred Hall seems to have made some significant contributions in West Balam?"

Haggis nodded and used a Loenese noble accent to say, "He’s a determined and brave man. He once led a special forces team of more than thirty men

to raid an Intis battalion with more than a thousand people, completely crippling them. I heard that he had also made significant contributions in East Balam; therefore, becoming a colonel before the age of thirty."

Sounds impressive… Perhaps Miss Justice's brother has already become a Beyonder with quite a significantly high Sequence… Hmm, in every aristocratic family, every generation should have some members taking the Beyonder path… Heh heh, if this Mr. Alfred finally reaches his goal of becoming a Beyonder with a relatively high Sequence and gaining the rank of brigadier general or major general through hardship, I wonder how sad would he be when he returns to Backlund to realize that he's no match for his sister's dog… Having drank his medicine before heading out today, Klein used the act of lampooning to adjust his mental state.

He didn't ask further about Alfred as he asked with a curious tone, "I realize that there are some differences in the traditions of East and West Balam. Here, in many houses, there are people with human bone decorations, but it's not present in East Balam.

"I've been here several times, but I've never been able to bring myself to get the answer to this question."

Haggis stopped and pointed to the exaggerated spiral staircase.

"Mr. Dantès, the general will be here in a few minutes."

After informing him of this, he chuckled.

"It's actually not common to see human bone traditions. Only fiefs that came under the royal family of the Balam Empire still have this tradition. To us, the death of family members doesn't mean that our relationship has come to an end. After the burial, we will take a piece of their bones and place it at home as a decoration as a way to indicate that the deceased continue being with the living.

"As for which bone to choose, it will be decided by the interring priest through a ritual. The best and most symbolic part is the skull.

"Some families will even make the skull into a vessel for drinking alcohol, using it only when entertaining the most honored guests.

"Mr. Dantès, if you close a deal this time, I wish to invite you home. I wish to offer Finis Wine in my grandfather’s skull to show my respects to you."

II

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Klein’s expression nearly fell apart. He felt that he was incapable of accepting the local customs in this aspect.

He laughed and was just about to be perfunctory when he saw a figure slowly walking down the golden railings of the staircase.

The person didn’t wear a hat. He was wearing a cut black military attire with shimmering gold buttons. The sash he wore was red like blood.

He had light-brown skin and a rather soft facial outline. His facial features looked scrunched up in the middle of his head, making his face appear abnormally big

Klein, who had obtained the relevant information from various channels, instantly recognized the man to be the dominant ruler of West Balam’s Northern State. He was Maysanchez who declared himself as general.

On the surface, he wavered between the factions of Loen, Intis, Feynapotter, Feysac, and the Resistance, maintaining a balance, but secretly, he had received the support of the Numinous Episcopate’s royal family faction.

Meanwhile, Klein suspected that this native general had established a solid working relationship with the Church of the God of Knowledge and

Wisdom.

As for Maysanchez’s strength, be it Vice Admiral Iceberg Edwina or Admiral of Stars Cattleya, he was noted to be a Sequence 5. But the two ladies didn’t mention which pathway he was from, as the powers this local general exhibited were mostly related to spirits, but he carried a mystical item from the Death pathway.

"Good afternoon, Your Excellency." Klein took off his hat, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

At this moment, he sensed gazes locking onto him from some unknown location. They were like lights that flashed across the golden angel figures, the sunlight reflected from the stained glass or the lustrous glow from the smooth marble.

"Hello there, Mr. Dantès," Maysanchez replied in Dutanese.

Having grasped Dutanese through his marionette, Klein naturally was able to understand him. However, in the Southern Continent, the longer he stayed in East and West Balam, the more he felt the similarities between Dutanese and ancient Feysac.

Although these two languages obviously followed different systems, making it much more difficult if he were to truly study Dutanese, certain details were shockingly similar as it was as though they shared a common heritage.

Klein could only be certain that the heritage wasn’t Jotun.

Pretending as though he hadn’t noticed anything, he very naturally chatted with Maysanchez until the other party raised the topic of the arms deal.

"How many goods do you have in total?"

Klein laughed and replied, "It wouldn’t be a problem equipping three to four thousand people. In addition, there will be a few cannons."

Maysanchez fell silent and said, "Name your price."

Klein pretended to deliberate and said, "If you wish for me to send the goods to the Northern State, the price would be 50,000 pounds. If you send your troops to retrieve the goods with me and be responsible for the subsequent transportation and safety, it will only cost 40,000 pounds."

Maysanchez thought and said, "The latter.

"Take the down payment and go with my men. Once they see the goods and move it onto our carriages, my men will pay the rest."

He paused for a moment and then added, "However, I do not have much Loen gold pounds."

So you don’t have enough foreign reserves… Klein surveyed the area and said with an unconcerned smile, "You can directly pay me in gold coins, or even gold bars or gold bricks."

Maysanchez was rather decisive. He didn’t waste any time to nod and say, "Deal. I’ll get Haggis to bring my men and money to you tomorrow."

Not bad. I like doing business with people who don’t haggle… Klein first heaved a sigh of relief before suspecting if his price was too low.

After Klein left the general’s residence, Maysanchez suddenly looked up and said to the person above, "Your Excellency Lucca, is this the person you’re waiting for?"

One story above the beautiful staircase, a figure slowly appeared.

He was an elder in a white robe with inlaid brass lines. His hair was completely white and neatly combed. His pair of gray-green eyes were so

deep that they appeared bottomless.

He replied with an unhurried tone, "There’s no way to be certain. Although my prophecy tells me that I’ll meet the person who can resolve my future predicament in the next two days here, that person was too ordinary. Besides being a Beyonder, there’s nothing worth taking note of.

"Of course, I can’t tell the more profound truth. He might have an existence that’s at least not weaker than me behind him."

Having said that, he slowly walked down and, after a few seconds, said, "I’ll attempt to use a dream to see if I can discover more."

"Do I need to prepare a special room for you?" Maysanchez asked reverently.

Lucca shook his head.

"I’ll use the activity room here. Hmm… The best time will be four hours later. Don’t disturb me before that happens."

He then entered the room, sat down, and leaned against the sofa. He relaxed himself, closed his eyes, and fell silent.

Only when it slowly turned dark did the old gentleman fall asleep.

In the dream, he found himself standing in the hall of the general’s residence, standing at the first floor of the beautiful staircase. By the side was Maysanchez and numerous guards.

The middle-aged man named Dwayne Dantès was standing opposite him when he suddenly curled his lips into a smile, revealing an exaggerated smile.

Flames soared up as poker cards fell from above.

Lucca’s green eyes instantly darkened as Dwayne Dantès’s body instantly fell into a strange darkness that appeared.

The old white-robed gentleman immediately spread his arms open, revealing a dark vortex at his chest.

The vortex expanded and devoured Dwayne Dantès.

Before Lucca could confirm the situation, he felt something. He turned to the side and saw Maysanchez’s face squirming and turning tall before instantly becoming another Dwayne Dantès.

Almost at the same time, Haggis and all the guards present turned into Dwayne Dantès. All of them were casting their gaze at Lucca!

Lucca was jolted awake, and under the watch of Maysanchez, who had entered at some point in time, he faltered for two seconds and said heavily, "I have to personally meet that gentleman from before and see the demigod behind him."

Before he finished his sentence, he subconsciously turned his head to look out the window.

At this moment, the street lamps lit up. It was dark outside, and the crimson moon’s moonlight was strangely tainted with a bloody color.

Another Blood Moon!

Thankfully there’s Mr. Fool… I must say that there are way too many Blood Moons this year… It’s only been two months since the last time… I didn’t even have any time to prepare! Fors who sat up, wiped her cold sweat, and muttered silently.

She had arrived at a town near Delaire Forest and had checked into a hotel. She shared a room with Xio, and they had made preparations to do some investigations of the abandoned castle early tomorrow morning. To Fors’s

surprise, there was a Blood Moon just as she was preparing to get some rest.

At this moment, she seemed to recall something as her body stiffly turned to the side.

Xio, who had exhorted her to sleep early, had already woken up at some point in time. She was looking at her with her eyes open.

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CHAPTER 954
STRANGE ANCIENT CASTLE

Fors’s gaze met Xio’s in midair as both parties remained silent.

After a while, Fors chuckled dryly.

"Haha, you haven’t fallen asleep?"

Xio frowned and said, "What happened to you?"

"Nothing. Didn’t I tell you before? Whenever the full moon happens, I won’t be in a good state. It’s even worse during the Blood Moon," Fors replied as though everything was normal.

Xio sized her up and pulled her blanket.

"I remember that you brought sleeping pills?"

"There’s no need for that. I’ve fine now." Seeing that Xio wasn’t pressing further, Fors secretly heaved a sigh of relief. "Go back to sleep. We still have to head into the forest early tomorrow morning."

Xio didn’t say another word as she turned around, gripped the blanket, and closed her eyes.

Before long, her breathing turned heavier and became more drawn out and uniform.

Fors stared blankly at the ceiling as her thoughts ran wild. At some point in time, she fell asleep as well.

The next day at noon. In the core region of Delaire Forest, in front of a collapsed, ancient castle covered in green vines.

Fors wiped the perspiration on her forehead and exhaled.

"We’re finally here…”

Xio shot her a glance and said, "The boss at the hotel told me that we only need two hours to get here."

They had set off before six in the morning, but they had spent nearly seven hours to arrive.

The corners of Fors’s lips twitched as she said, "Ideal conditions and reality are different. There weren’t any trails for us to take towards the end. We needed to explore and forge a new path ourselves!"

Xio took out her triangular blade, nodded, and said, "You should’ve foreseen this from the beginning, but you refused to have a guide as suggested by the hotel’s boss."

"As an Astrologer, I don’t believe such trivialities will cause any trouble. Look, aren’t we there now? Besides, the time is perfect. The wraiths and ghosts are definitely in their weakest state." Having forced a smile, Fors held Leymano’s Travels in one hand as she pointed with the other. "I didn’t notice it before, but the more I think about it, the more puzzled I become."

"About what?" Xio also cast her gaze to the ancient abandoned castle that was covered by vines.

Fors casually found an excuse.

"Tell me, who would build a castle in the middle of a forest? Furthermore, they didn’t open up a trail to it…”

Before she finished her sentence, she really found the matter a little odd.

Xio thought and said, "Perhaps there was a trail, but after the castle was abandoned, whatever traces of it had been wiped out with time."

Fors stroked the hair by her ear and shook her head.

"Then why would they abandon it?

"If they had considered safety back when building it, it would be more dangerous building it far from the town in an uninhabited castle. If it’s just for vacations, with the way nobles do things, they wouldn’t abandon it even if the maintenance and repairs are difficult."

Xio blurted out, "Could it be because it’s haunted?"

Fors thought for a few seconds.

"Won’t someone who can build such a huge castle hire Beyonders to deal with the ghosts?

"I suspect that the three Churches and the kingdom’s government don’t know of this ancient castle. Otherwise, it doesn’t make sense that they will leave the Beyonder ingredients inside…”

Upon saying that, she raised a possibility:

"An ancient castle of the Sanguine?"

Such extraordinary creatures enjoyed living in places with few people. Furthermore, they were usually connected to dark forests and ancient castles.

In addition, information about this ancient castle came from the Sanguine to begin with.

"It’s possible," Xio first agreed before disagreeing. "Will the Sanguine be afraid of ghosts? They definitely have the means to deal with the ancient

wraiths inside."

Makes sense… Don’t tell me those Sanguine don’t like money and don’t care about the search for Beyonder ingredients? Fors recalled Mr. Moon’s behavior and denied her hypothesis. In deliberation, she said, "Unless there’s some problem that’s not easy to resolve. That’s what made the bigwigs choose to skirt around it."

In that case, her operation would become more dangerous than she had anticipated.

Xio tersely agreed.

"Let’s do some preliminary investigations while the sun is still strong."

"Alright." Fors held Leymano’s Travels and approached the half-collapsed ancient castle one step at a time.

The two soon arrived at the entrance which was two-thirds blocked by rocks. They discovered that, beneath the green vines, the stone walls were mottled and heavily weathered as though it had been in existence for a very, very long period of time.

Xio wasn’t in a rush to enter. Calling out to Fors, they circled around the castle slowly.

When they returned to the entrance, she said in puzzlement, "This castle’s style is purely defensive. It doesn’t seem to consider the problems needed for living in it. Besides, many of the peculiarities of the building are ones I haven’t heard of before. It has probably existed in the late Fourth Epoch or even earlier."

"What’s there to defend again? Beastmen? Treants? They’ve all gone extinct after the Cataclysm. Haha, don’t tell me that it’s a building from the Second or Third Epoch?" Fors casually replied.

She observed the terrain and left the entrance with Xio before arriving at a relatively complete wall. She reached out her palm and pressed on it.

Although she lacked combat experience, she was rather skilled when it came to the various aspects before a battle.

An illusory light appeared in front of her, allowing Fors and Xio to instantly enter the abandoned castle.

The first thing that they saw was a collapsed staircase and layers of remnant concrete from above. There were rays of pure sunlight shining in from above, as well as masonry and rotten wood. There weren’t any animal or bird feces or any green weeds on the ground.

With a whoosh, the wind seeped into their bones, chilling them despite it being noon.

Fors activated her Spirit Body and surveyed the area, but she failed to see any Spirit Bodies.

However, she noticed that on the right of a remnant collapsed wall, there was a rather intact stone staircase.

The staircase was mottled and scuffed as it extended downwards to an unknown location.

"Shall we head over there to take a look?" Fors shot a glance at Xio and made a suggestion.

From her point of view, everything else in the castle could either be taken in at a glance or collapsed and stacked together. If they wished to do thorough investigations, it was certain that it would take a rather long amount of time. Therefore, it was better to gain a general understanding of the overall picture to assure themselves.

Xio glanced around and nodded gently.

"The cold wind is gathering underground… I suspect that all the wraiths and ghosts are hidden in the area where the staircase leads to."

"Yeah." Fors cautiously walked towards the mottled stone staircase and followed the steps, which were covered in gravel, down.

The staircase was rather narrow, allowing only one person to pass at a time. Furthermore, they spiraled down, leaving Fors shaken.

Tap. Tap. Tap. As their footsteps echoed into the distance, the light that shone inside the staircase darkened.

Xio lit the lantern in her hand as Fors opened Leymano’s Travels, swiping a page with great familiarity.

A bright and warm light burst out, illuminating the mottled stairs ahead of them. Tensed, Fors and Xio walked down one level at a time.

On the way, cold wind blew past them, making them overreact and nearly cause them to launch attacks at nonexistent enemies.

Tap. Tap. Tap. In the narrow and silent environment, Fors finally walked down the steps and stepped onto rather flat and solid ground.

She had originally wanted to say "being in a place like this for too long will really make one go mad," but due to the silent and heavy atmosphere around her, she didn’t make a sound. She was afraid that breaking the silence would result in extremely terrible developments.

Using the blob of light that was floating above her, Fors cast her gaze forward in an attempt to see what was at the end of the staircase.

It was a huge hall that was nearly ten meters tall. There were black tiles laid on the ground with water droplets seeping out. There were signs of damage everywhere.

Dozens of meters away, where the light nearly failed to illuminate the other end of the hall, there was a pair of double bronze doors sitting there silently.

It went from the bottom to the top, and the rocks on the walls to its side had peeled off. The statues were in shambles, revealing the dark brown mud underneath.

The surface of the door was engraved with dense symbols and strange patterns. They had a very mysterious and heavy feel, as though they were sealing something or blocking out something.

Fors finally couldn’t help but say with a hushed tone, "Have you seen such large doors before?"

Beside her, Xio shook her head.

"No."

Fors immediately drew a gasp.

"Say, what could be behind that door? Where does it lead to?

"C-could it be the reason for building this castle in the first place? To prevent the creatures behind the door from coming out?"

Xio circled the area but didn’t find any murals that could provide any information. All she found was that the closer she was to the bronze door, the more water seeped out from the ground. There were also more and more abandoned silver-black swords on the ground.

"During the Fourth and Fifth Epoch, murals were very common in all castles and buildings. And before the Cataclysm, it can be seen from various elvish ruins that supernatural creatures similarly like to use murals to praise their deities and to record their daily lives…” Xio said slowly, using her experience and knowledge from being a bounty hunter.

Fors nodded slightly and said, "That’s indeed the case.

"This ancient castle is more magical than I imagined."

At this moment, she felt hesitant. She even had thoughts of leaving and seeking Mr. World’s help.

Having heard Little Sun describe so many horror stories when exploring abandoned ruins at the Tarot Gatherings, her mind couldn’t help but wander when placed in a similar situation. She was scaring herself.

"Perhaps we can gather more clues by going closer." Xio boldly took a few steps forward and approached the heavy sealed door that seemed to lead somewhere.

Fors gripped Leymano’s Travels tightly and hurriedly chased after her.

As she walked, she suddenly saw bright redness appear before her.

What seeped out from the cracks of the black tiles was no longer water but staggering blood!

This… Fors immediately flipped open the notebook with a bronze-green cover and cast her sight on Xio through the corner of her eye.

It was unknown when Xio had turned pale. Her eyes were dark-green, and her lips were red. The area around her was dark and gloomy as her expression looked extremely distorted.

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CHAPTER 955
ANCIENT WRAITH

Fors’s pupils dilated as though she was trying to absorb more light into her eyes to better see Xio’s current circumstances.

Meanwhile, the light in front of her suddenly exploded with a flash several times more blinding than old-school cameras, blanketing the surroundings with whiteness.

Following that, her finger swiped on a page on Leymano’s Travels as black fog soared from her feet, enveloping her entire body.

The thick black fog quickly transformed into palm-sized illusory bats as they flew in different directions of the underground hall.

This was Wings of Darkness which The Moon had recorded in Leymano’s Travels!

Its original use was to enhance one’s speed and bestow temporary flight capabilities while producing a horde of blood-sucking bats to attack the enemy. However, Fors didn’t use it for this purpose. Instead, she used it as a "prop" for her performance.

After the illusory bats flew away, the space where Fors stood was already empty.

At some point in time, she had appeared more than ten meters away!

After subconsciously escaping and defending herself, Fors could finally calm down as she hurriedly cast her gaze onto Xio, who had turned

abnormal.

However, Xio only appeared to have slightly disheveled blonde hair with malt-colored skin due to her continuous forays out in the sun. Besides looking somewhat blank as though she was surprised as to why her friend had such a huge reaction, she didn’t show any signs of being influenced by wraiths or ghosts.

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"What happened?" Xio asked warily.

Fors narrowed her eyes without directly replying to her. Flipping through Leymano’s Travels’s pages, she asked, "Xio, how tall are you?"

Seemingly realizing something, Xio answered, "152. Isn’t that so?"

Just as she said that, Fors’s fingers slid across the notebook’s page which was filled with symbols and magical labels.

Silently, a holy light swirling with fire plummeted down from above.

The unadulterated and bright light instantly enveloped Xio before rippling outward with sunlight.

As the blazing light stabbed into Fors’s eyes, she saw the hall collapse and the surroundings space shatter like glass.

This feeling was gone in a flash as Fors realized that she was still in her original spot. She had yet to flee.

That was an illusion? She hurriedly turned to the side and saw Xio looking at the damaged region of the heavy door.

Fors deliberated for a moment and asked, "Xio, how tall are you?"

Xio glanced at her and angrily said, "Stop asking such inane questions!"

Phew, she’s real… Fors heaved a sigh of relief as she quickly described her encounter to Xio.

After a few seconds of thought, Xio used her lantern-wielding hand to nudge Fors’s arm.

"Let’s retreat. Perhaps the closer we are to that door, the easier it is to hallucinate."

"Yes, that’s possible!" Fors nodded in agreement as she quickly moved back a few steps.

Following that, she surveyed the area and asked in puzzlement, "Why can’t we find any wraiths or ghosts here?

"Such an environment should be something that they enjoy."

Xio was perplexed as well. She then did a careful observation before landing her gaze on the blob of sunlight floating above Fors’s head.

"Try extinguishing it," she suggested.

Fors came to a realization as she immediately dispelled the light. Silent darkness blanketed the area and ruled the underground hall once more. Only the lantern’s faint yellow light put up a resistance against all of this.

Then, Fors saw two figures in her Spirit Vision.

They were rather close to the bronze door. One was a female with coiled hair, wearing a knight’s trousers and a garish shirt for ease of movement. The other was a man wearing silver-black armor as he held a sword that was almost snapping due to rust.

The former’s face was a blur as it kept wandering between the door and where Fors and Xio arrived. The latter was loitering beside the door, muttering something

These are the two ancient wraiths? Fors nudged Xio and said with a suppressed voice, "I see Spirit Bodies."

"I see them as well. They aren’t hiding at all." Xio curved her back as she readied herself for a fight.

Fors hurriedly nudged her.

"Don’t be hasty. We aren’t sure that they’re the targets."

She attempted to take three steps forward, but the two relatively blurry figures didn’t even look at her.

Fors thought and suddenly said, "Ma’am, what are you doing?"

She had heard of stories in other mysticism circles that wraiths, shadows, and other higher-level Spirit Body creatures could be communicated with.

However, she regretted it the moment she said that. This was because communication didn’t allow her to achieve her goal. There was no way she could persuade the other party to kill themselves and hand over the cursed item and remnant spirituality of an ancient wraith.

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Just as Fors was considering if she should launch a direct attack, the lady in the garish shirt and knight’s trousers replied with a flat tone, "I’m searching for my husband.

"He’s a guard here."

Communication is really possible… Fors pressed out of curiosity, "Where did he go?"

At this moment, Xio approached as she wore a look of extreme vigilance.

The blurry-figured lady answered blankly,

"He’s a guard here. He told me that magical power seeps out from behind the door, corrupting his teammates. He got me to leave as quickly as possible with a messenger.

"He said that he would ensure that I escaped safely, but I don’t wish for that. I want to leave with him… After sending off the messenger, I returned midway and returned underground. But I can’t find him…”

With the age of this castle exceeding the present Epoch, the last defender has definitely transformed into an ancient wraith. Hmm, this lady’s story has moved me. I really can’t bear to attack her… Fors’s mind whirled as she carefully took a few steps and circled around the ancient female wraith and approached the bronze door.

This time, she and Xio didn’t suffer any more hallucinations. This seemed to imply that her encounter was subconsciously created by the lady.

A distance from the silver-black armored knight with a rusty sword, Fors attempted to ask, "Sir, what are you doing?"

The knight paused and said with a humming voice, "I’m guarding this Door of Blackness. I need to ensure that my wife has escaped safely.

"If you meet her, tell her that her knight will fight for her to the very last moment."

Ah… Door of Blackness. It’s clearly a bronze door… Wait, what did he say? He said that he’s guarding the door to ensure that his wife can safely escape? I-isn’t this the other half of that woman’s story which she

described? This is her husband? Fors was taken aback as she kept looking back and forth between the two ancient wraiths.

The lady wearing a garish shirt and knight’s trousers slowly approached the bronze door before returning to the middle of the hall repeatedly. As for the silver-black armored man, he was patrolling about the door with a rotting sword in hand. At times, they would pass by without noticing each other.

Such a scene must’ve gone on for at least fifteen hundred years, or even longer… Fors commented silently as she turned to glance at Xio. She realized that her friend’s eyes were already welling with tears.

What an easily touched person… Fors couldn’t help it as she shouted at the female wraith, "Look at the door. Your husband has been there all along!"

The lady slowed down her pace and first glanced at Fors before casting her gaze at the heavy door.

Her blank gaze penetrated the knight, landing behind him.

"Why can’t I find him…” the wraith repeated her words and repeated her actions.

Fors felt an explicable sense of sorrow, and just as she was about to shout again, she saw the knight turn to look at her and Xio. He shouted, "Who are you?"

Just as he said that, the female wraith cast her gaze at Xio and Fors again.

Fors immediately felt her thoughts slow down as a coldness quickly formed inside her body and rippled out, freezing her flesh and joints. As for Xio, she too was suffering from the same condition. The area around the lantern dimmed significantly.

At this moment, two bolts of lightning lit up in Xio’s eyes.

This made the wraith let out a painful cry as his body turned faint.

Xio instantly escaped from her frozen state and threw out the triangular blade in her hand towards the female wraith.

Bolts of illusory lightning swirled around the triangular blade’s tip, stabbing straight into the lady.

Psychic Lashing!

The female wraith screamed as her body turned faint.

Fors instantly snapped awake as she slid her fingers across the open Leymano’s Travels.

Life seemed to immediately gather from the surrounding shadows, turning into a pitch-black chain that restrained the male wraith to the ground, sealing off his "mouth."

Abyss Chains!

Meanwhile, Xio rushed out, and with an illusory brand in hand, she stamped it on the female wraith.

With her holding back the female wraith, Fors’s actions became more composed.

She flipped through Leymano’s Travels and slid her fingers.

Silver lightning that branched out and blasted out of thin air, smiting the male wraith and turning the area into a lightning hellscape.

Finally, a holy pillar of light that had flames swirling around it appeared. It enveloped the male wraith and completely purified him.

With one enemy taken down, Fors immediately turned and dealt with the female wraith with Xio.

She didn’t hold back on using powers from Leymano’s Travels. She came up with wise combinations of them, and using Xio’s suppression, she switched between restrainment powers and offense from time to time. Soon, they finished off their target.

Everything fell silent as Fors heaved a sigh of relief. She then looked at the battlefield with a look of disbelief.

"Is that it?"

She originally imagined that two ancient wraiths had unique powers, and with their higher levels, they weren’t something sub-Sequence 5 Beyonders could deal with. However, she realized that everything happened rather smoothly.

This made her truly realize how godly Leymano’s Travels was. She also began looking forward to the next Sequence as a Scribe.

Xio was somewhat astonished as she thought for a few seconds.

"It’s no wonder someone told me that, beneath the level of demigods, the number of Beyonders, their cooperation, and usage of powers are more important than the Sequence."

Just as she said that, she heard knocking sounds resonate.

It broke the silence of the hall, and it came from behind the bronze door.

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CHAPTER 956
THE THINGS BEHIND THE DOOR

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Behind the bronze door, the slamming sounds continued incessantly, echoing throughout the vast underground hall as though they came from an abnormally distant past.

Fors clamped up and couldn’t help but tremble. Unable to help it, she suppressed her voice:

"What could be behind the door?" "I’ve no idea." Xio honestly shook her head, subconsciously gulping.

Her right hand, which had just picked up her triangular blade, had her joints protruding out as her blood vessels surfaced. Clearly, she was gripping the triangular blade tightly.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The slamming sounds continued without any change in frequency. Each sound seemed to strike at Fors’s and Xio’s hearts, leaving their hair standing and scalps tingling

"It likely won’t be able to come out, right… If it could so easily come out, it wouldn’t have waited until today." Fors tried to console herself with parched

lips.

Xio nodded heavily and said, "We leave once the ingredients form."

"In such an environment and atmosphere, her curiosity had been completely overwhelmed by her innate fear.

"Alright!" As Fors glanced at the spots where the two ancient wraiths had been cleansed, she blamed The Moon for providing undetailed information. He hadn’t mentioned that there was such a strange door beneath the ancient castle.

At this moment, glowing dust was landing on the ground like shattered gems, forming into two piles as they gathered together.

Around them, nearly formless remnant spirituality condensed into a seemingly ethereal crystal.

Accompanied by the crystals and dust were two different items. One was ring-shaped and completely transparent as though it was a corroded ring. The other was an eye carved from crystal, with faint black gas swirling within. Upon seeing this scene, Fors suddenly realized something

An ancient wraith was a ghost-like creature with a Beyonder characteristic mixed in. The cursed item would be related to a particular item while they were still alive, fusing with the characteristic and turning into a foundation to which they relied on for their existence. It was precisely because of this that different ancient wraiths had different corresponding cursed items in shape and form. However, they were essentially the same. And the dust was another type of characteristic. It was the source of most of their strength, stemming from remnant spirituality, slightly equivalent to the blood and ingredients of monsters.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The entity striking behind the bronze door didn’t let up at all. It kept testing Fors’s and Xio’s psyche.

Being afraid and cautious, the duo’s bodies trembled so much that they even imagined that the door was shaking slightly. Their racing hearts were in their throats.

With them being able to head for the staircase at any moment, Fors finally waited until the ancient wraiths’ powder and cursed items took form.

As she signaled to Xio to be wary, she crouched down and took out three square metal boxes she had prepared.

After some hesitation, Fors looked up at Xio and said, "These two ancient wraiths have been waiting for each other for so long. I-I’m thinking of separating a little of what they left behind and burying them together… Uh, in that case, I’ll get a cursed item, and you’ll get a pile of dust. We’ll split the remaining spirituality, alright?"

Xio didn’t hesitate as she nodded.

"Alright!"

Fors silently heaved a sigh of relief as she pursed her lips. Flipping through Leymano’s Travels, she slid her finger across a particular page.

The five nails on her right hand immediately grew long and sharp, covering black patterns and symbols.

This was the Claw of Corrosion from the Sanguine.

Upon seeing her palm transform, Fors grabbed at the ground, easily digging a hole and leaving behind a corrosive mark.

Right on the heels of that, she placed the crystal eyeball-like cursed item and a pile of dust into the hole before filling the hole with the gravel and

soil she had dug up.

She lightly grazed the flattened ground with her fingernails, writing an epitaph.

"Returning for you; Defending for you; Together forever."

After doing all of this, Fors sighed when she heard the slamming behind the bronze turn louder.

Bam!

She jumped in fright and hurriedly placed the pile of dust, ring-shaped curse item, and remnant spirituality into the different square metal boxes.

Then, she put the boxes away, stood up, and slowly walked to the spiraling and cramped staircase with Xio.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The slamming sounds behind the bronze door grew intense as Fors and Xio subconsciously gritted their teeth, following the staircase and rapidly heading up.

They increased their speed until they began running. They ignored the possibility of falling on the staircase and tumbling down like a wheel.

Finally, Fors and Xio saw sunlight.

Sunlight beamed in from outside, shining upon the staircase ahead of them. It was bright, pure, and warm.

At this moment, the slamming sounds from underground had come to a sudden stop without any follow-up.

Fors and Xio exchanged looks, slowed down their pace, and after a few large strides, returned to the top of the abandoned ancient castle.

The duo didn’t say a word and directly left the area, returning to the periphery of the forest.

After walking for some time, Fors calmed down and pursed her lips.

"It was really terrifying. Although the thing behind the bronze door didn’t deal any harm to us, nor did it even show itself, I think it was more terrifying than the ancient wraiths. Compared to all my past experiences—uh, it’s far more terrifying. In those few minutes, I couldn’t help but imagine all the different tragic deaths I might suffer. Each one was more terrifying than the last, but none of them were as terrifying as the slamming sounds."

Xio turned her head and agreed with a nod.

"Yeah. I felt as though I was walking on the edge of a cliff."

Fors was about to continue when she saw two streams of bright red blood flowing down Xio’s nose.

"Xio, Xio! Your nose is bleeding!" Fors hurriedly warned her friend.

Xio was taken aback as her pupils dilated.

"You too!"

"Ah?" Fors blankly reached out her hand and wiped her nose. It felt warm to the touch, wet and sticky.

She was appalled as she hurriedly held her right hand in front of her and saw red blood smeared across it. It was bright and striking.

"A result from being overly-anxious?" Fors muttered in puzzlement.

At this moment, through the sunlight diffusing through the forest’s canopy, she realized that faint black spots were quickly growing on her wrists at a discernible pace.

The black spots rapidly spread, covering her arms and the back of her hands.

"Ah!" Fors subconsciously cried out as she hurriedly looked at Xio.

She saw Xio’s cheeks and neck covered with black spots!

"Th-this isn’t normal!" Fors blurted out.

Xio sensed the abnormality happening to the both of them as she recalled and said, "Do you still remember what that female wraith said?

"She said that the guards from before had been corrupted by the forces that seeped out from behind the bronze door!

"Could it be that we’ve been corrupted?"

Fors was taken aback for a second before she nodded heavily.

"It’s possible!"

She hurriedly took out the medicine that she had prepared, handing over some of it to Xio. Then, she twisted the lid off and downed two bottles.

However, they didn’t show any signs of recovering. The black spots grew in number, turning their vision blurry.

Badump! Badump! Before long, Fors, whose efforts to save herself were in vain, could hear her heartbeat and sense her body beginning to lose strength.

Out of ideas, she quivered her lips, clenched her teeth, and turned her body around. She took a few steps to open up a distance from Xio.

Then, she bowed her head and chanted Mr. Fool’s honorific name.

In about ten seconds, she saw dark red light appear, engulfing her like the tide.

The ravings and roaring vanished and Fors saw the familiar mottled table and the ten high-back chairs opposite her.

She then realized that her dizziness and blurred vision had vanished. There weren’t any more of the strange, accentuated black spots on her Spirit Body.

"Thank you for your help." Fors hurriedly stood up and bowed at the figure shrouded in gray fog at the end of the long bronze table.

Then, she heard Mr. Fool say in a calm tone, "Your spirit had been corrupted by some force.

"It should be fine now."

Cleansed by Mr. Fool? Fors’s heart stirred. Just as she wanted to make a request to Mr. Fool regarding how Xio could be saved, the scene before turned red as light soared up.

After a brief pause, she found herself in the real world, back in Delaire Forest. The black spots on the back of her hands and wrists were rapidly fading and receding. The blood that kept dripping from her nose had already come to a stop.

Returning to her body, she saw Xio weakly slumped on a tree. Her face was covered in black spots, making her look terrifying. The muscles on both sides of her neck were tensed up as her mind spun.

A few seconds later, she walked over quickly, pressed Xio on the shoulders and rapidly said, "I have a way to save you, but you need to follow my instructions!

"Use ancient Hermes to say this: The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era…”

Xio could hardly turn her swollen eyelids. Looking at Fors for two seconds, she heavily chanted, "The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog.

"The King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

Just as she said that, Xio saw dark red starlight surge out from the void, sweeping over her.

Indescribable roars continued for a second before vanishing from Xio’s ears. She then saw herself seated in an ancient and majestic palace. She was sitting beside a mottled, bronze table. At her feet was a boundless grayish-white fog. In front of her was a lofty figure looking down upon her.

This scene was both unfamiliar and familiar to her. She had once seen it in a "dream," but she hadn’t ever had it again after the exorcism ritual.

That purification was actually useless… Xio suddenly had this thought as she stood up in deliberation, bowing at the figure enshrouded in gray fog.

"You are the great King of Yellow and Black?"

She didn’t appear too surprised or alarmed, as though she had already expected it.

"You can call me Mr. Fool. Have a seat," the figure with an epic aura replied calmly.

Xio bowed again and sat down, confirming that she had escaped her unwell state.

She looked to her sides and thought before asking, "Honorable Mr. Fool, does Fors Wall have a seat here?"

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool nodded gently and said, "Yes." Xio fell silent for a second and directly asked, "Can I join just like her?"

The Fool chuckled.

"It’s a gathering they organized on their own accord but is convened by me.

"There’s still a seat available at present. You may join.

"Draw a card. They use one of the Major Arcana cards as their code name."

Xio didn’t ask or speak further. She immediately nodded.

"Yes, Mr. Fool."

On the bronze table in front of her, a deck of tarot cards immediately appeared.

Xio reached out her right hand and solemnly cut the deck, pulled out one card, and flipped it over.

Her card depicted an angel with a trumpet and the sleeping dead awaiting salvation: the Judgment card!

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CHAPTER 957
GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Looking at the Judgment card in hand, Xio was taken aback.

"This greatly meets my expectations."

Shrouded in the gray fog, The Fool nodded and calmly said, "The gathering is held here at three in the afternoon on Mondays, Backlund time. Be prepared.

"During the gathering, you can exchange information, ingredients, formulas, and knowledge. You can also pay a certain price to entrust missions to the other members."

Xio recalled for a moment before nodding in enlightenment.

"Yes, Mr. Fool."

Believing that this was all for the day, she heard the voice coming from the end of the bronze table.

"What did you do before being corrupted by that force?"

We really were corrupted… Xio composed herself and completely recounted her exploration of the ancient castle with Fors. She emphasized the bronze door which had been named the Door of Blackness, as well as the ancient castle’s guard that had been reduced to a wraith due to the corruption.

Then, she noticed Mr. Fool nod slightly as he said calmly, "Don’t enter that ancient castle again before you reach Sequence 4.

"It’s time for you to return."

Xio then got up, and following the descriptions in the religious rituals, she bowed and said, "Your wish is my wish."

Just as she said that, the dark red color surged in front of her. After everything dissipated, she was back in the real world and leaning against a thick tree.

Subconsciously looking at the back of her hand, she realized that the black spots were rapidly turning faint. Xio looked up at Fors who was staring at her worriedly.

As their gazes met, Fors was first delighted before revealing a smile. She opened her mouth but was at a loss for words.

Xio slowly exhaled and pointed ahead.

"Let’s first return to the town."

"Alright!" Fors answered without any hesitation.

At this moment above the gray fog, The Fool Klein was tapping on the edge of the mottled table as he considered Miss Magician and Miss Judgment’s encounter.

The object or power sealed behind the Door of Blackness could still corrupt the guards and explorers outside, even without escaping. Just the mere thought of it was terrifying!

Furthermore, this corruption stemmed from the Spirit Body. To resolve it, Klein had only two solutions. One was to make the corrupted entity hold a complete secret deed ritual as he used the powers above the gray fog and

the Sun Brooch to complete a purification. The other was to directly pull the Spirit Body over, using the gray fog to "cleanse" them. As he didn’t have the luxury of time, he had chosen the latter.

What could it be?

The most corruptive power belongs to the Devil pathway… That place connects to the Abyss? That’s not impossible. Based on Little Sun’s description, during the early and mid-stages of the Second Epoch, Devils often left the Abyss and were active over the land. It was only when the ancient sun god appeared, causing ancient gods to perish one after another, did they retreat into the Abyss and seal themselves in. Based on that, it’s rather normal to have an underground ancient entrance in the Northern Continent to lead to the Abyss… It can also be imagined that a castle is built with men sent to watch over it…

But the problem lies in the fact that it’s been millennia. Why would there still be an existence slamming the door? Are the Devils planning on returning? Klein made a preliminary guess.

He temporarily had no plans on exploring the abandoned castle to verify his thoughts, because it was unlikely that there would be any changes anytime soon. After all, since it was news that came from the Sanguine, he could get The Moon Emlyn to do some gathering of information to figure out the history of the castle.

Reining in this thought, Klein removed the topaz chain from his wrist and divined if the matter regarding the ancient castle was pressing. He received a negative answer.

He immediately returned to the real world and waited for the local ruler, General Maysanchez, to send over the down payment.

At two in the afternoon, Feynapotter time, Haggis, with his hair combed backward while dressed as a Northern Continent gentleman, carried a black

leather suitcase with a team of guards as he knocked on Dwayne Dantès's door.

"Please come on in." A warm and elegant voice sounded from the inside. It was first Loenese in a Backlund accent before it was changed to the local language of Dutanese.

Haggis turned the doorknob and entered. He saw Dwayne Dantès with his white sideburns and deep, blue eyes stand up from his reclining chair while pressing down the ends of his black vest.

"Good afternoon, my friend." This Loen gentleman with good looks and bearings took two steps forward and extended his right palm.

This time, he switched to using Loenese.

Haggis replied using the accent of a Loenese noble, "It's my honor to be your friend."

After he shook hands with Dwayne Dantès, he surveyed the area and chuckled.

"Is this your servant?"

He pointed at a mixed-blood youth standing behind the arms dealer. In between the lines, he was asking if he was trustworthy. After all, Dwayne Dantès hadn't brought any servants back when he visited the general's residence yesterday.

"Yes, his greatest strength is the ability to keep secrets." Dwayne Dantès smiled as he pointed to the leather sofa across the reclining chair.

With two guards following Haggis, he closed the door and sat down. He then said with a smile, "I've heard of an Intis proverb that's said to be from Emperor Roselle.

"He said that dead men tell no tales."

Dwayne Dantès said with a laugh.

"Emperor Roselle also said something else:

"Corpses can speak."

"Is that so? This is my first time hearing of this." Haggis enjoyed conversing with a Northern Continent gentleman, so they continued their conversation for a while before he lifted up the leather suitcase beside him and opened it.

At that instant, there seemed to be overflowing golden lusters. Under the illumination from the sunlight outside, the entire room seemed to brighten significantly

Haggis then looked at Dwayne Dantes and said, "5,000 Loen gold pounds, as well as 5,000 gold coins and gold bars.

"This is the down payment.

"I'll bring along the remaining 30,000 pounds in cash and gold the entire time, and will hand it over when the arms deal is completed."

Dwayne Dantès scanned the stacks of cash, the gold coins, and gold bars in the leather suitcase before retracting his gaze and saying with a smile, "When do we set off?"

Haggis closed the leather suitcase and handed it to Dwayne Dantès's servant and said simply, "Tomorrow morning."

He paused for two seconds before saying, "Mr. Dantès, the general has a guest who would like to meet you."

Dwayne Dantès’s expression didn’t change as he fell silent for a few seconds.

"When?"

"Now," Haggis said without daring to show any signs of being perfunctory. "He’s downstairs."

Dwayne Dantès nodded slightly.

"Please invite him up."

Haggis immediately heaved a sigh of relief and left with his guards. They followed the stairwell down.

Before long, Lucca, in a simple white robe with brass lines adorning it, walked up. His silver hair had been combed very neatly.

When he arrived by Dwayne Dantès’s door, he heard a voice from the inside just as he raised his hand.

"Please come in."

This time they spoke using ancient Feysac.

Lucca’s expression didn’t change as he naturally pushed open the door.

He then saw the middle-aged gentleman who had rather good looks and qualities from yesterday standing beside a reclining chair facing him.

And sitting on the reclining chair was a young man. He had black hair and brown eyes, with a thin, cut face. He had a cold temperament.

Lucca was taken aback as he took a step forward, entered the room, and closed the door.

After he sat down on the sofa in a composed manner, his gray-green eyes clearly reflected the young man in front of him.

"Gehrman Sparrow?" Lucca addressed him with a rhetorical question.

Gehrman Sparrow curled the corners of his mouth.

"Directly addressing others by their full name is impolite."

Lucca nodded and said, "My apologies for my faux pas. I recall that you advanced to Sequence 5 less than half a year ago, or it might have only been three months. Yes, it should have been completed when you were in the ruins of the battlefield of gods. I never expected… that you were already a demigod. It left me a little bewildered."

Gehrman Sparrow smiled without giving any explanations.

After a brief moment of silence, he said in an unhurried tone, "Why are you visiting me?"

Lucca calmly replied, "I don’t know."

The atmosphere in the room suddenly turned somewhat odd. Gehrman Sparrow seemed to forget that there was an elderly man sitting opposite him that needed him to speak again.

Lucca indiscernibly nodded and said, "This is the thing: I made a prophecy by chance not too long ago. In that prophecy, I will be in a rather thorny situation in the future. And one of the people I met with over these few days will help me deal with it.

"I’m not sure if it’s you, but I’d rather be safe than sorry. So I decided to meet you and get to know each other.

"My name is Lucca Brewster, a clergyman who serves the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. I’m presently in charge of various matters in West

Balam."

Gehrman Sparrow nodded and said, "Not bad. I now know you. I don’t believe I need to introduce myself, right?"

"Of course," Lucca thought and said. "You should be a Bizarro Sorcerer. I recently received some intel that there has been some reshuffling among the Secret Order in Intis."

He didn’t see Gehrman Sparrow reveal any looks of shock. This powerful adventurer, who was famous across the Five Seas, said after a moment of silence, "Zaratul has returned."

The look in Lucca’s eyes changed immediately before being restored to normal.

Then, he stood up and nodded.

"Since we’ve gotten to know each other, it’s time we bid farewell."

After saying this, he walked to the door, twisted the doorknob, and left the room.

Sitting on the reclining chair, Gehrman Sparrow watched as his figure was concealed inch by inch by the wooden door until he completely disappeared. Then, he chuckled.

"What a charlatan."

"Yes." Dwayne Dantès, who was standing beside the reclining chair, found a seat and sat down. Then, he picked up a cup of tea and sipped from it.

With white sideburns and deep blue eyes, he and the thin, angular-faced Gehrman Sparrow exchanged looks and smiled in unison.

On Monday afternoon, Dwayne Dantès took out his golden pocket watch, opened it, and said to Haggis opposite him, "We’re almost arriving at our destination. I believe you and your men need some rest."

"An excellent suggestion," Haggis was rather agreeable.

Dwayne Dantès pointed at the street ahead.

"There’s a hotel ahead. Let’s rest there for half a day before we set off again tomorrow."

Haggis didn’t object to it as he turned to the front and instructed the carriage driver.

After checking into the hotel, Dwayne Dantès declined Haggis’s invitation for afternoon tea by using an afternoon nap as an excuse.

Slightly more than half an hour later, above the boundless gray fog, Klein sat in the seat belonging to The Fool.

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CHAPTER 958
LABELING

Dark red beams shot up, materializing into different figures on both sides of the long bronze table.

The unchanging silence above the gray fog was broken as the eternal palace seemed to have an additional, inexplicable sense of life to it.

Just as Justice Audrey regained her senses of her surroundings, she prepared to stand up to greet the existence at the end of the long bronze table.

At this moment, as a senior Spectator, she acutely noticed a difference:

There were two more members than last week!

One of them was a man sitting to the right of Mr. Moon. The other was a lady sitting to the left of The Hermit.

Audrey first felt happy that the Tarot Club was developing and becoming stronger, but then she kept to her professional instincts and quickly began observing

Due to where she sat, the man opposite her was much easier to observe compared to the lady two seats away from her. Therefore, she placed her attention on the man.

Black hair… Green eyes… He doesn’t wear a coat… A vest matched with a shirt… He sits a little oddly. He’s not accustomed to sitting properly… He’s probably about 180 cm tall… He has quite a desultory temperament… He’s

rather tense… At one glance, Justice Audrey had "read" plenty of information from the rather blurry figure.

She then noticed something different.

The man was quickly surveying his surroundings.

Such an action wasn’t a problem in itself. Anyone who came to this strange and secret location would definitely subconsciously size up the other members and attempt to grasp their traits and general situation so as to calm down. But the problem was that the man was moving his gaze too quickly!

His gaze had swept past The Moon, The Hanged Man, and the other members without pausing.

To Audrey, this was a very clear phenomenon. It didn’t mean that the man was observing his surroundings and studying the members, but that he was finding someone!

He was looking for someone he had in mind!

Audrey instantly felt a little excited, as she believed that this newcomer knew one of the members present!

Who could it be? She observed for another second and realized that the man sitting diagonally opposite her had fixed his gaze on The World Gehrman Sparrow.

Audrey was thrilled as though she had discovered a secret. She thought in enlightenment, The newcomer is a friend of Mr. World, or it’s at least the case that they know each other in the real world. He also knows that he’s a Tarot Club member…

Or it could also be said that Mr. World had inducted him into the gathering… No, that’s not very possible. If that were the case, the newcomer would be much more certain. He wouldn’t be eagerly searching

for someone he knows. He definitely would’ve placed his gaze on the other members for a longer period of time…

Furthermore, such an action also proves that he’s not a Blessed of Mr. Fool.

What is his relationship with Mr. World?

Audrey held onto her thoughts of continuing to observe as she stood up and turned to face the seat

of honor.

During this process, she took the opportunity to sweep her gaze at the new member sitting beside Ma’am Hermit.

She’s exchanging looks with Miss Magician… Her height… Xio has finally passed the test and joined the gathering? Upon identifying her, Audrey did a curtsy towards the figure shrouded in gray fog.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~"

Just as she issued the brisk greeting, she realized something:

Mr. Fool is a little different from before.

This great existence seemed to be more one with the entire gray fog, palace, and space. "His" aura was lofty and mighty, like the sea or sky.

This feeling isn’t something that can be described with words… Mr. Fool has taken one more step to "His" awakening, allowing him to retrieve more of "His" authority over "His" divine kingdom? Audrey’s eyes darted around, feeling curious and delighted, as well as a little sense of pride.

At this moment, The Hanged Man Alger and The Hermit Cattleya had noticed the two new members. They noticed that the lady was a little short and was secretly exchanging signals with Miss Magician. She was both

unfamiliar but also familiar with the Tarot Gathering. At the very least, she was unlike the man in the white shirt and black vest. He had frantically stood up only after everyone began bowing.

In addition, they sensed that the new male member took special notice of The World Gehrman Sparrow, causing them to have many guesses.

These thoughts resonated in their minds, but they didn't express them. The Hanged Man and The Hermit completed the usual first steps of the gathering with Miss Justice.

As for The Sun Derrick, he was just happy because the Tarot Club had new members again! The Moon Emlyn had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he felt a sense of superiority being more senior compared to the newcomers, but on the other hand, he had a feeling that there were just too many messiahs for the apocalypse.

After some searching, The Star Leonard determined that the one sitting at the bottom end of the long bronze table was Klein Moretti. This was because his physical characteristics were similar to that of Gehrman Sparrow's description.

He's hiding his true identity… He doesn't relax even in such a secretive gathering, using two levels of disguises. I have to take note… Just as this thought flashed across his mind, Leonard saw the girl sitting to the left of Mr. Fool stand up. Then, she led everyone into bowing.

He was taken aback, failing to react in time. He stood out when amongst all the standing members.

After a second, Leonard snapped back to his senses and hurriedly stood up to deliver the greeting.

Opposite him, Xio glanced at him, equating him to Fors to a certain extent.

Fors shared the same thought; however, she had equated the man with Xio to a certain extent. This was because Xio had appeared rather unreliable when they first met.

"This is The Star, and this is Judgment. Take your seats and introduce yourself." The Fool Klein raised his right hand and casually pointed.

The name "The Star" keeps making me think that it’s the code name for a lady… As Leonard thought in exasperation, he focused and began labeling the members in the order of their introduction.

Miss Justice. Seems like a young lady, but she might’ve donned two levels of disguise like Klein… She’s rather optimistic and cheerful. Although I can’t tell the details of her attire, it appears to be very classy…

Mr. Hanged Man. Burly, restrained. He’s likely to be a straightforward but rash person…

Miss Magician. The way she looks at me is weird. From time to time, she will glance at Klein. I’ve no idea what’s on her mind. She seems rather ordinary overall with nothing standing out…

Mr. Sun. He’s very tall, but the way he speaks sounds like he’s going through puberty. Although he’s silent, he does seem rather friendly…

Miss Hermit-uh, Ma’am Hermit. She exudes a mature and staid demeanor. She’s likely a very experienced Beyonder…

Mr. Moon. Rather young and looks a little reserved. Makes me feel like I’ve seen him somewhere before, but I can’t recall it. I’ll continue observing…

Miss Judgment. Very short with very obvious traits. However, I can’t be sure if she has donned two levels of disguises…

The World. Very, very gloomy. This is likely his disguise… Well, it might also be his true nature… He wasn’t a demigod before, meaning that this

gathering has no lack of Mid-Sequence Beyonders. I wonder if I’m the weakest one…

As Leonard was observing the other members, Judgment Xio Derecha was also using her powers as a Sheriff to extract the traits of the different members and keeping them in mind.

A noble lady… Sailor or a crewmember… Rather young and introverted, but it’s not serious… Rather strong. The leader of at least a mid-sized team… Arrogant, of pretty good family background… Desultory, not staid… Gloomy, terrifying…

Amidst their thoughts, the other members finished their self-introduction. The Hermit Cattleya looked towards the end of the long bronze table and said with a bow, "Honorable Mr. Fool, I didn’t receive any new Roselle diary pages this time."

Didn’t receive… Does this mean that Queen Mystic didn’t reply? I wonder what Bernadette is busy with… The Fool Klein nodded and calmly replied, "Begin the transactions then."

As he said that, Audrey noticed the reactions of The Hermit and The Hanged Man. She realized that they had yet to notice Mr. Fool turning loftier and sublime.

Was I the only one who noticed it? Audrey darted her eyes slightly in thought, feeling somewhat poignant and a little happy.

Of course, she also knew that Ma’am Hermit and Mr. Hanged Man didn’t dare to look at Mr. Fool too much, especially the former. Most of the time, she only dared to look at the table edge in front of Mr. Fool.

Table edge… Eh, there’s an additional Card of Blasphemy! Audrey’s gaze froze before she retracted it in pleasant surprise.

With her intuition as a Spectator, she was quite certain that the obtaining of the new Card of Blasphemy was likely to be the same matter as The World Gehrman Sparrow’s mental problems but with different outcomes.

She hesitated for a moment and observed the area.

"I have nothing I need."

Cattleya, Derrick, Emlyn, and Fors had already made preparations and were about to advance; therefore, they didn’t have any requests. Likewise for Alger who was still digesting his potion.

Instead, it was Leonard who had the desire to purchase a mystical item. However, with no one showing him an example, he was momentarily unsure how to begin. All he could do was divert some attention to considering Mr. Fool’s need for Roselle diaries.

After selling Tinder, he wasn’t lacking in money. Furthermore, having had the experience using Creeping Hunger, he realized that having a powerful mystical item was rather useful.

At this point, Fors looked at the silent Xio before looking opposite her.

"Mr. Hanged Man, I have a material that I wish to be made into a mystical item by that Artisan."

She was referring to the ancient wraith powder that Xio had.

Alger shook his head.

"That Artisan has been controlled by some members of the Rose School of Thought who believe in the Primordial Moon. That’s all I know. The subsequent matters have been left to Ma’am Hermit to handle."

Rose School of Thought… Primordial Moon believers… Left to Ma’am Hermit to handle… Leonard and Xio looked around and suddenly realized

that the gathering they were participating in wasn’t as loose as they imagined.

They were secretly traversing through the shadows of the world!

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CHAPTER 959
EVEN NEWCOMERS ARE DIFFERENT AMONGST THEMSELVES

Cattleya turned her body slightly to the side and looked at The Magician.

"It’s a little complicated. I suggest that you wait for another one to two weeks. I’m unable to promise anything. All I can say is that there should be someone to help you create the mystical item when the time comes."

Should be someone… It also means that it might not be the original Artisan… Does this mean that she’s planning on nurturing an Artisan for herself? Or could it be that she’s thinking of a way to turn the original Artisan into a Sealed Artifact, using a machine to create machines? Hmm, Ma’am Hermit is indeed an experienced Beyonder… Leonard listened quietly while doing some analysis. It was the first time he was this serious during a meeting.

"No problem." Fors had the utmost confidence in Ma’am Hermit. After all, she had already obtained the Mythical Creature’s blood and was likely to undergo a qualitative change in time.

At this moment, she heard The World say with a hoarse voice, "If this matter requires my help, you can get my help."

To Klein, the Mother Tree of Desire’s abnormal interest in the gray fog, as well as Emperor Roselle’s warning to "be careful of the moon," which made him, who was determined to figure out the secret of transmigration and the

door of light, take note of matters involving the Rose School of Thought and the Primordial Moon believers more than ever before. Furthermore, the Artisan was now involved in both matters.

Cattleya never expected The World to offer his help. After some silence, she nodded slightly.

"Alright. If I’m unable to handle it, I’ll seek your help through Mr. Fool."

She had deliberately said "through Mr. Fool" to inform the two newcomers that the Tarot Club had a magical way of contacting one another. There was no need for them to be stumped or be in a dilemma in such aspects. It was something they would understand in due time.

As the pirate admiral with the highest bounty across the Five Seas, and as a pirate crew leader of hundreds of subordinates, she wasn’t doing this solely out of goodwill, nor was she worried that the two newcomers would affect the progress of the gathering because of excessive questions. Instead, it was a way to assert dominance in front of newcomers.

Of course, unless time was of the essence, leaving Cattleya no time to set up a ritual, she would in fact rather summon Gehrman Sparrow’s messenger than trouble Mr. Fool.

Seek help through Mr. Fool… Xio vaguely understood something and held back her urge to look at Fors.

Seek help through Mr. Fool? Leonard’s thoughts raced quickly as he made a guess.

Seeing that someone had begun, he relaxed a little and deliberated for a few seconds. Then, he said, "I need a mystical item."

"What kind?" Audrey answered at the perfect time to prevent an awkward atmosphere from descending upon the area.

Leonard verbally showed his indecision and subconsciously replied, "I don’t know…”

He only had such a plan, but he hadn’t thought carefully into the details. He only realized that there was this possibility after being pulled into the gathering

Doesn’t know… Is he an idiot… The Fool Klein, who knew Leonard’s desultoriness and casualness, resisted the urge to laugh and criticized him inwardly.

Seeing everyone’s gaze fall on him with mixed expressions, Leonard immediately felt embarrassed as he hurriedly added, "I mean there are no limits on the type. As long as it’s geared towards offense, has rather stealth-oriented attributes, and lesser negative side effects, it would be fine by me."

This was to boost his Nightmare’s control to its full extent. At times, he could control a target by himself while Pallez Zoroast controlled the mystical item, giving the dazed opponent a lethal strike. Once he became a Spirit Warlock, with a natural spirit or wraith or shadow sealed in his teeth to aid him, he could do two or even three things at a time.

After Mr. Star finished his explanation, Alger didn’t harp over the details. He asked, "Roughly what level is needed?"

"Somewhere around a Grade 2 Sealed Artifact but slightly stronger. Uh, corresponding to Sequence 5 or 6." Leonard had habitually described the item using the parlance of an official Beyonder before switching to more common terminology.

At that instant, a thought flashed across the minds of Audrey, Cattleya, Alger, and Xio: Mr. Star is an official Beyonder, or at least he once was!

From their point of view, although Beyonders that didn’t belong to any official organization would at times use the concept of grades when describing Sealed Artifacts, they wouldn’t consider using such a vague

description when precision was needed in expressing their thoughts and requests. One would often choose a method of explanation that was more direct and easier to understand.

Therefore, the conclusion easily appeared.

This way, things turned way more interesting.

Uh, Mr. World is actually very familiar with an official Beyonder… How did they get to know each other? Why would he rope in an official Beyonder into the Tarot Club? Audrey didn’t say a word as she maintained her state as a Spectator while enjoying herself.

At this moment, Alger tersely acknowledged.

"A mystical item at Sequence 5 costs at least 9,000 pounds. For one that matches your request, it can typically exceed 12,000 pounds."

Very frank… Leonard nodded.

"I understand."

After hearing his reply, Klein nearly facepalmed as he sighed inwardly.

A-aren’t you showing your hidden card to Mr. Hanged Man by doing so?

I dare bet that if he has something suitable, the price will definitely be above 12,000 pounds!

Aside from the 7,000 pounds from Tinder, Leonard still actually has other savings… With the guidance of a grandpa from the Marauder pathway, he has likely amassed quite a bit. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to purchase Tinder…

I get it. He’s not afraid of being fleeced, because he still can purchase from the Hermits of Fate. He can compare the traits and prices from both sides…

But the problem is that gathering happens once every half a year. It’s totally not at the Tarot Gathering’s pace…

At this moment in time, Klein couldn’t help but consider selling items to the dear poet that had repeated effects or were of little use after becoming a demigod.

He then heard Mr. Hanged Man reply in a deep and calm manner, "Alright. I’ll keep an eye out for you."

"Okay." Cattleya and the other members expressed their stance as well.

Following that, there weren’t any transactions, allowing the gathering to automatically enter the free exchange segment.

Without waiting for Mr. Hanged Man to inquire, Derrick raised his hand and said, "I’m already back in the City of Silver. The chief has informed me that we will begin another round of preliminary explorations of the Giant King’s Court shortly.

"Does he mean that I should make use of this time to advance to become a Priest of Light?"

Giant King’s Court? Explorations of the Giant King’s Court? Leonard cast his gaze to the pubescent youth one seat away from him in surprise.

From what he knew, the Giant King’s Court had already been destroyed long ago in the Second Epoch. Pallez Zoroast, as an angel, had already said that it had vanished from the rivers of time.

To his surprise, The Sun of the Tarot Club was about to explore the area, but none of the members were astonished!

Yes, not one of them. Leonard subconsciously looked at Miss Judgment who was also a newcomer, but he realized that she was apparently aware of this and had remained rather calm.

This… Miss Magician has privately kept Miss Judgment up to speed. Only Leonard doesn’t know anything… The Fool Klein leaned into his seat and seriously analyzed himself.

After he pulled Leonard above the gray fog and assigned him The Star card, he had ignored him. He didn’t even write to him or introduce the Tarot Club’s general situation to him!

Compared to women, men truly aren’t meticulous with the details… Klein was just about to control The World Gehrman to explain to The Star Leonard when he saw The Moon Emlyn glance at the poet beside him and say with a rather faint smile, "The Giant King’s Court is in the Forsaken Land of the Gods."

After saying that, he ignored Leonard’s reaction, and he said to The Sun, "Have you obtained the ingredients to Priest of Light?"

He knew that someone had only received the formula just one to two weeks ago.

"Yes, I’ve gotten it from Mr. World," Derrick answered honestly, but he didn’t go into the details of the transaction.

At this moment, Leonard’s mind was filled with the words "Forsaken Land of the Gods" and "Giant King’s Court." He had a feeling like he had walked out of a fantasy or myth.

He instinctively reassessed his knowledge of the Tarot Club, realizing the weight of the simple words of how "the members come from different places."

Even the Churches of the seven deities are unable to find the Forsaken Land of the Gods, but the Tarot Club can do so. It has even roped in a member from there… Right, Azik Eggers, who I believe wields the Death card, doesn’t appear at the gathering… Apart from the members here, there are others that come directly under Mr. Fool? It’s as I first imagined. It’s a

secret organization that might develop into an orthodox Church. It’s not much weaker than the Aurora Order or Rose School of Thought, and it might even be stronger in certain aspects… This is really a Divine Council… Amidst Leonard’s thoughts, Alger agreed with Derrick’s guess.

"That’s what it is.

"Exploring the Giant King’s Court is a very dangerous matter. He wishes that you quickly grow stronger to resist that Elder Shepherd’s level."

Derrick nodded in vague acknowledgment.

"I get it. Thank you, Mr. Hanged Man."

He then shared information about what he saw at Nois City, leaving Leonard and Xio dumbfounded. They had no idea how such a strange state and atmosphere was generated.

However, The Fool Klein noticed something familiar. He felt that Nois City and the foggy town resembled each other to a certain degree.

The walking crowd was suspected to be lifeless marionettes!

Could it be that there’s a higher Sequence item of the Seer pathway or some monster there? Klein didn’t say a word as he silently took note of Nois City.

At this moment, Xio glanced at The World and said, showcasing some goodwill, "MI9 has recently been investigating Gehrman Sparrow’s origins."

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CHAPTER 960
THE FOOL'S SIGH

Upon hearing the name "Gehrman Sparrow," all the members on both sides of the long bronze table looked at The World. No one spoke or interjected.

They more or less knew that the crazy adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, had once again done something huge such as killing Admiral Hell Ludwell. However, Audrey didn’t believe that this was the main reason why he would suffer mental problems.

And the way they acted made Leonard instantly realize a fact: Everyone in the Tarot Club knew that The World was Gehrman Sparrow!

Klein’s disguise is really well done… However, why does he let the other members know of his identity as Gehrman Sparrow? Isn’t it common sense to hide one’s background at such gatherings? Amidst his puzzlement, Leonard heard the blurry-figured The World reply with a hoarse voice, "What clues has MI9 obtained?"

Xio showed no shame in betraying MI9 as she replied frankly, "They have confirmed that the identity "Gehrman Sparrow’ is fabricated, and that it was sourced from Backlund."

Indeed, he was previously known as Sherlock Moriarty. He became Gehrman Sparrow after leaving Backlund. However, Sherlock Moriarty isn’t his real identity either… Leonard subconsciously surveyed the area and realized that, although the other members weren’t surprised, they didn’t seem to show any signs of realizing it. Hence, he believed that their knowledge of Klein was only at the uppermost surface.

Under Klein’s control, The World Gehrman Sparrow chuckled and answered Miss Judgment’s information, "There’s no need to bother about such matters."

To him, to figure out who the fake identity of Gehrman Sparrow was given to, one had to first capture Queen Mystic Bernadette, or one had to obtain news of Sharron from her. Clearly, the level of difficulty made it nearly impossible!

In comparison, if they did the same as Leonard, starting off from the events in which Detective Sherlock Moriarty was involved in, there was a chance of them figuring out more. However, since MI9 had chosen the wrong direction, Klein was happy to see them take the futile route.

Mr. World is unperturbed and very confident… Xio retracted her gaze and didn’t continue.

At this moment, Audrey deliberated and asked, "Mr. World, will you be returning to Backlund in the future? Will you still use the identity of Dwayne Dantès?"

As a qualified Psychiatrist, she obviously wasn’t going to inform the mental problems of The World to the other members of the Tarot Club. She only wanted to confirm if he would still return to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. That way, she could be in closer contact to him in the real world, allowing for a better checkup.

She didn’t conceal the matter about Dwayne Dantès, since the original members already knew of it. As for Mr. Star, he was clearly familiar with Mr. World. As for Xio, she had Fors to inform her ahead of time.

Ah… Upon hearing Miss Justice’s words, Leonard nearly couldn’t believe his ears as he felt a little confused.

Klein Moretti is equivalent to Dwayne Dantès?

I’ve once asked Dwayne Dantès to his face about Klein Moretti…

No, it’s impossible. Dwayne Dantès is an undying creature who has lived since the Fourth Epoch! The way he acted is sufficient proof!

Old Man said the same too!

At that moment, Leonard was unable to control his tumultuous emotions. He instinctively rejected the fact that Miss Justice had conveyed.

If what appeared here was his Astral Projection, he felt that his expressions would be rather obviousoscillating between red and white.

Opposite Leonard, Xio looked up as well, looking at Mr. World with puzzlement.

He’s Dwayne Dantès? Dwayne Dantès is Gehrman Sparrow?

I even accepted his butler’s mission… I even protected him before… I even pitied him…

He can squash me to death with one hand…

Xio then turn her head and glared at Fors.

I don’t dare to say too much about Mr. World. I could only briefly mention a little… Fors turned her eyes away in guilt as she mumbled silently. Alger and Cattleya figured out something from the duo’s reactions:

Miss Magician and Miss Judgment knew each other in the real world.

Miss Judgment had once interacted with Dwayne Dantès before, but she didn’t know that he was Gehrman Sparrow.

As a senior Spectator, Audrey noticed the abnormalities of The Star and Judgment without a doubt. Immediately, she understood that she had made

too many assumptions.

Audrey, you need to reflect on this! She said to herself in embarrassment and attempted to make up for it before Mr. World spoke.

"Dwayne Dantès is a public identity. At times, it will be Mr. World, and at other times, it will be the other Blessed of Mr. Fool."

So that’s how it is… Makes sense! Leonard’s mind stirred as he instantly accepted Miss Justice’s explanation and figured out many different matters.

The Dwayne Dantès that appeared during the period before the breaching of Saint Samuel Cathedral’s Chanis Gate was likely Klein. The periods before and after that was the other Blessed of Mr. Fool… That Death Consul? Indeed, he’s an undying creature who lived since the Fourth Epoch. Old Man’s old friend…

Yes, it might be other Blessed I’m not aware of, but their levels definitely aren’t too low… Uh, other Blessed. Does that mean Klein is also considered Mr. Fool’s Blessed?

It’s no wonder Mr. Fool said that he comes here and participates in the gathering, but the experiences are different from mine… It’s because he’s a Blessed and enjoys the benediction of Mr. Fool, so he also has the ancient aura. It’s why Old Man doesn’t realize that Dwayne Dantès is played by different people?

This explains my previous question. As a Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow doesn’t need to keep his identity a secret…

But to Judgment Xio, Dwayne Dantès being a public identity, or him being Gehrman Sparrow was not her concern. The reason why she overreacted was because, after realizing the truth, she felt embarrassed at all her various thoughts back then.

Seeing the atmosphere return to normal, Klein heaved a sigh of relief inwardly and controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to answer Miss Justice’s question:

"Yes.

"When the time comes, there might be certain matters that need all of your help."

When he finished the second half of his sentence, The World swept his gaze across Justice, The Magician, Judgment, The Star, and The Moon.

H-he has plans for something in Backlund? Audrey instantly understood what Mr. World was getting at. She momentarily felt excited but also a little worried.

She was excited because she was about to participate in a secret operation that all the participants didn’t seem to have any ties with, to the point of not even "knowing" each other. This was something she had always looked forward to. Her worries stemmed from whether the operation would have any threat to Backlund’s safety, or if it would bring harm to the innocent.

As for danger to herself, she wasn’t too worried. She believed that Mr. World would arrange for the mission to be held in the outskirts of the city, provide key information, or cause serious misdirection to the target, without needing any direct participation or fighting.

Emlyn was the second person to read between the lines. And this was a result of his innate aversion towards troublesome matters.

Will it be troublesome… he thought with a frown without saying a word. While the other members came to a realization, Alger took a deep look at The World Gehrman Sparrow and said, "I recently received news that the traitor of the Church of Evernight, Archbishop Ince Zangwill, was killed in West Balam. Before that, he had already become a demigod. As for the Sealed Artifact, 0-08, which he had stolen, it’s unknown whose hands it’s

in. The only thing that can be certain is that the battlefield was cleared by the Church of Evernight."

The Hanged Man is very updated on the news… It’s only been a few days… The Church should’ve kept this strictly confidential… However, there might have been other factions arriving at the square that day… Leonard was taken aback for a moment, but he didn’t provide more information.

This was the first time Audrey and company were learning about the news. They could only determine that the matter was rather important from the words "archbishop," "0-08," and "demigod." But since it had nothing to do with them and there wasn’t any stimulus, they weren’t too intrigued. As for Cattleya, as she had a deep impression and understanding of Grade o Sealed Artifacts, she planned on seeking out information on this via Queen Mystic and the Moses Ascetic Order after she returned to the real world.

Amidst a brief silence, The Fool Klein suddenly extended his hand and rapped the table’s surface.

He felt that he needed to warn all the members.

In the coming years, the waves of the times would come flooding in!

Upon hearing that, all the members straightened their backs or made them even straighter before turning to the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Even the newly joined Leonard and Xio were no exception. It was almost instinctive.

Then, they heard the profound and lofty figure chuckle amidst the gray fog.

"The times have changed as a result."

The times have changed because of this? Ince Zangwill’s matter is key to something? Although it involves a Grade o Sealed Artifact… Alger, who

had shared the news, never expected Mr. Fool to place so much emphasis on it. He was momentarily unsure what to make out of it.

Leonard, who had participated in the matter regarding Ince Zangwill, felt the same. He knew how important and terrifying the Grade o Sealed Artifact was, but he never expected that what happened that day would change the times.

While Audrey and company wore blank looks, they focused fully. Even Derrick couldn’t help but take on an attentive posture.

The Fool Klein surveyed the area and said with a laugh and sigh, "Adam is one step closer to being divine."

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CHAPTER 961
WARNING BY INFORMING

"Adam is one step closer to being divine."

Such a simple sentence instantly sent tumultuous waves through every member of the Tarot Club.

Other than Leonard, the other members, including Xio, who had been briefed of the important points by The Magician, immediately recalled the information regarding Adam.

Ancient sun god, City of Silver’s Creator’s son, brother of Blasphemer Amon. Suspected to be one of the eight Kings of Angels!

And this mythical figure, who had existed before the Cataclysm, had become active in the real world once again. And "He" was one step closer to being divine!

This… To make Mr. Fool sigh, it means that Adam is probably just one step short of reaching the divine throne, Sequence 0. There’s a chance that "He" might make that step at any moment. Alger subconsciously came to a conclusion as he hurriedly clasped his hands and couldn’t help but have thoughts run through his mind.

A Sequence o true god is about to be born!

There are still births of true gods in the Fifth Epoch?

This will be the first true god this Epoch?

With deities no longer able to descend upon the real world, it’s unbelievable that a Sequence o would still appear!

Alger always found himself ambitious, with him now setting his sights on Sequence 2, to become an angel. But after hearing about Adam, he still found it unacceptable.

One had to know that the last one to become a Sequence o true god was the former God of Craftsmanship, the present God of Steam and Machinery. And that happened in the late Fourth Epoch.

Since the Fifth Epoch, over thirteen hundred years, there hadn’t been any new existence reaching the divine throne!

It’s no wonder Mr. Fool said that the times will change as a result… Amidst Cattleya’s scattered thoughts, she suddenly came to a realization as though she could see the waves that marked the end of an Epoch flooding over.

Having already gathered the ingredients and being in the process of making preparations for the Sequence 4 ritual, she believed she had the chance of attaining divinity in the near future to change her existence. She was still reeling in joy, anticipation, and unease. But at this moment, she suddenly felt a baffling sense of horror. All she wanted was to communicate with Queen Mystic face to face to confirm the future.

Fors, Xio, and the other members had a myriad of reactions. On the one hand, they were shocked that Adam was attempting to achieve divinity, never expecting such a matter to happen in the Fifth Epoch. On the other hand, they were worried for their present life. After all, be it Emlyn from the Sanguine, or Audrey who lived amongst the Loen Kingdom’s upper-class, all of them lived in the Fifth Epoch, living in a situation which had more than a thousand years of history setting the foundation. They didn’t dare have any sacrilegious thoughts towards true gods. Even when facing evil gods like the True Creator, they still felt a deep sense of fear and awe, acknowledging "Their" level and loftiness. Therefore, they couldn’t believe

that a god would soon appear. They couldn’t imagine what would happen next.

In their eyes, The Fool was a reawakened ancient god, an existence who originally sat at the throne of Sequence o.

One step closer to being divine… Becoming a god… Derrick was mostly excited, as though he could see hope and have a target to strive for.

To him, only a Sequence o could save the City of Silver!

Adam? Becoming a god… Although Leonard didn’t know who Adam was, just the simple words of being "one step closer to being divine" was easy to understand.

He connected it to that ordinary priest who had appeared after the battle ended and had picked up 0-08 in front of Klein.

That’s Adam? Or a subordinate of Adam? No, 0-08 is a Grade o Sealed Artifact. Only Adam, who’s very close to the divine throne, can do it personally with great certainty… It’s no wonder the battle with Ince Zangwill was easier than I expected. I thought the best outcome would be me and Klein dragging Ince Zangwill into hell together… Who’s Adam? Why haven’t I heard of "Him”…Perhaps a result of being parasitized by an angel, allowing him to know some of the secrets and developments of the Fourth Epoch, Leonard had a deeper understanding of Adam’s path to being divine. The impact he felt wasn’t too great, with most of his feelings puzzlement and curiosity over Adam’s true identity.

And at this moment, The Fool didn’t speak again or give further explanations. It was as though he was simply warning the members to make preparations for the change of the times.

Amidst the confusion and wandering thoughts, The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at The Star Leonard and simply said, "Adam is the son of the ancient sun god, Blasphemer Amon’s brother."

Leonard immediately jumped in fright and failed to control his expression.

He had a deep impression of Amon, and he had a deep trauma for Amon because of Old Man’s descriptions. And Adam was Amon’s brother, so it was very possible that the level of horror was likely the same between the two brothers!

The World ignored The Star’s reaction and continued, "It can be confirmed now that Adam is one of the eight Kings of Angels, titled ‘Angel of Imagination.’ ‘He’ is ranked on par with Angel of Time Amon.

"The reason for ‘Him’ targeting Ince Zangwill is to obtain 0-08 to make up any shortfalls for ‘His’ path to being divine. And ‘His’ plan succeeded."

Angel of Imagination… Adam is a King of Angels from the Spectator pathway? Audrey instantly connected this to the Dragon King Ankewelt’s title, Dragon of Imagination!

And she had long known that mind dragons represented the Spectator pathway.

As for Leonard, another comprehension obstacle appeared before him. He had been stumped by the concept of a King of Angels, but he was too embarrassed to ask. He had planned on seeking Old Man’s help when "He" awakened.

Alger pondered over Gehrman Sparrow’s words as his expression turned slightly odd. He probed, "You seem to have witnessed the matter?"

Just as he said that, all of them heard a familiar, hoarse laughter.

After Gehrman Sparrow finished laughing, he looked at The Star and said as though it was nothing, "The murder of Ince Zangwill was committed by me and my partner."

"…” Cattleya’s mind instantly went blank.

She could accept that Gehrman Sparrow could easily finish off Admiral Hell, but she couldn’t imagine that he would one day kill a real Sequence 4 demigod!

Cattleya quickly calmed down because, with a King of Angels involved in the battle, it was possible that a Sequence 5 could kill off a heavily injured demigod due to various coincidences. Furthermore, he had a partner.

Audrey "read" confidence from The World’s tone. She couldn’t help but ask out of curiosity, "Mr. World, have you already become a demigod?"

The World didn’t give a direct answer as he chuckled.

"In the future, all of you can entrust matters involving demigods to me."

Every member present figured out the meaning in between the lines.

He had become a genuine Sequence 4 demigod. Furthermore, he was the kind who had the ability to kill peers at his level!

At that instant, Cattleya became abnormally calm. She tried hard to recall everything that she had seen and heard regarding Gehrman Sparrow. She was very certain that he was only a Sequence 6 before the visit to the ruins of the battlefield of gods. He relied on the glove to match a Sequence 5.

As for Gehrman Sparrow’s search for mermaids without hunting any of them, it implied that it was a requirement of a ritual. This meant that he had indeed advanced to Sequence 5 back then. His various performances after that proved this point.

Today, it had only been about three months since Gehrman Sparrow stepped into the ruins of the battlefield of the gods, but he had already advanced to Sequence 4, becoming a demigod existence. This overturned Cattleya’s understanding of the world.

She wasn’t too old, with her age being less than thirty. But to reach Sequence 5 and gain the title of Admiral of Stars, it took her about seven to eight years. It was only in the past one or two years did she have the confidence to attempt to breach the gate to become a demigod. With her starting to make preparations, she believed she was already far ahead of the pack.

Mr. World is impressive! He became a demigod so quickly! Derrick sincerely felt joy. His idolization for Mr. World grew more intense as he hoped that he could be like him, becoming a demigod at the fastest speed possible.

Audrey was both alarmed and delighted. Following that, she gained an understanding towards the abnormality in Gehrman Sparrow’s mental state.

From the looks of it, his low spirits, gloomy, and depressed feelings happened after he became a demigod. These are the negative effects accumulated from potions. It’s just like how I nearly lost control when I became a Psychiatrist…

Also, after becoming a Sequence 4 and gaining godhood, he could naturally penetrate more of reality. He then realized that he had been sleeping for a very long time. His family had passed away, making him lose his goals…

How pitiful. With his warm nature, he must’ve had deep feelings for his family and friends…

However, I’m so envious. Does being Mr. Fool’s Blessed make one advance so quickly… I also wish to become a demigod early. Mr. Fool’s mention that "the times have changed as a result" leaves me fretting…

While Emlyn and the other members were still in shock, Alger, who also shared the same feelings and felt deep envy and jealousy towards Gehrman Sparrow, had other thoughts.

As Mr. Fool’s Blessed, Gehrman Sparrow’s embroilment with this King of Angels and 0-08 matter clearly isn’t an accident…

On the contrary, it might be more reasonable that it’s a mutual plan between Angel of Imagination Adam and Mr. Fool. That will explain it!

Two mythical figures that existed before the Cataclysm. One is awakening, and the other is making an advancement, the two secretly coming together!

Amidst his thoughts, Alger had another idea:

Since Adam had obtained 0-08 and opened the door to the divine throne, what about Mr. Fool? What benefit did "He" get in this matter?

Subconsciously, Alger turned his body and slightly bowed his head to look at the seat of honor.

He didn’t dare look directly, and could only look through the corner of his eye.

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CHAPTER 962
BEING KNOWN

Almost instantly, Alger discovered that Mr. Fool was somewhat different than before.

In the past, although Mr. Fool was distant and profound, making "Him" appear unfathomable, as though "He" was looking down upon everything from above, that was all. It wasn’t like "He" was now. Even though "He" wasn’t doing anything, he seemed to have fused with the entire space, a clear expression of "Him" being the ruler at the pinnacle level.

Sweeping his gaze, Alger saw the third Card of Blasphemy as he felt more certain of his guess.

Indeed, Mr. Fool and the Angel of Imagination Adam had cooperated to machinate Ince Zangwill’s demise. One of "Them" obtained 0-08, making "Him" take one step closer to being a god, while the other obtained the various benefits in a Card of Blasphemy and regained a substantial amount of "His" strength!

The times will change as a result! At that instant, Alger had a deeper understanding of what Mr. Fool had just said.

The other members undoubtedly noticed him turning his head, and they realized that he was looking at Mr. Fool.

After a brief moment of surprise, they made a certain realization at different speeds.

Mr. Fool was aware of Angel of Imagination Adam’s plot against Ince Zangwill from the very beginning and had sent "His" Blessed to cooperate. "He" had even provided a certain level of help!

If that weren’t the case, how could a recently advanced demigod participate in a matter that involved a King of Angels and Grade o Sealed Artifact?

If this weren’t the case, The World wouldn’t have been able to understand the situation that well, even if he had been embroiled due to all kinds of coincidences.

The obtaining of the Card of Blasphemy, Mr. World’s advancement, Ince Zangwill’s death, the meeting of Angel of Imagination Adam’s goal, these all happened in one week… This means that the relationship between them is tightly intertwined… My previous intuition was right. The obtaining of a new Card of Blasphemy and the appearance of an abnormality in Mr. World’s mental state were the different outcomes of the same matter… Audrey nodded very slightly as she confirmed her theory.

Leonard was increasingly convinced that Ince Zangwill’s matter was more complicated than he had imagined. Apart from King of Angels Adam, there were likely other important figures of similar levels appearing back then. Otherwise, Amon’s brother, the son of the ancient sun god, had no need to seek out Mr. Fool’s help. After all, no matter how powerful or terrifying 0-08 was, it was incapable of comparing with the Blasphemer as described by Old Man, as Adam and Amon were likely on par with each other.

The evil spirit that Klein pulled into the Underworld probably isn’t simple. It’s definitely not something that "being from the Hunter pathway" would be enough to describe it with… Hmm, Klein’s participation in the matter regarding Ince Zangwill isn’t solely for revenge, but is also due to Mr. Fool’s orders… As Leonard sighed, he didn’t generate any negative feelings. Instead, he was secretly relieved.

From his point of view, this was a very ordinary situation. Mr. Fool’s agreement in convening such a gathering to establish a corresponding

organization while hosting it as a deity was definitely not because "He" solely wished to make the area more lively or being done out of goodwill. "He" definitely had "His" goals and needs that "He" wished Blessed like Klein or members like him could complete.

Therefore, seeking revenge on Ince Zangwill and accepting Mr. Fool’s mission wasn’t in conflict. The latter didn’t reduce the former’s meaning and importance.

As for why he was relieved, it was because Leonard believed that Mr. Fool’s clear expression of "His" goals had made it better than having everything chaotic and unknown. He didn’t need to guess or wait with trepidation.

He originally had intense wariness for Pallez Zoroast precisely because he wasn’t sure of "His" true motives.

At this moment, The Fool Klein didn’t say a word. He didn’t confirm or deny the members’ guesses and theories. Controlling The World, he made him continue, "Adam might’ve established a very secretive organization, and it has been secretly steering the development of the times.

"Many important figures you might never have expected are members of this organization. They would machinate one matter after another.

"Also, after leaving this place, do not say or write down Adam’s name, including ‘His’ title. Try not to think about such matters, because ‘He’ has the trait of ‘any mention of it will be known.’ The more you know about ‘Him,’ the more ‘He’ might know about you. This is somewhat similar to 0-08."

After hearing Mr. World’s description, Audrey instantly recalled learning of the mysterious organization from Mr. Fool: the Twilight Hermit Order!

This made her quickly come up with a corresponding theory:

The King of Angels Adam was the leader of the Twilight Hermit Order!

The Angel of Imagination was a member of the Spectator pathway. Likewise for 0-08. Therefore, "any mention of it will be known" was a Beyonder power of this pathway at higher Sequences. Likewise for "the more you know of it, the more it knows of you"!

Impressive… But won't this be rather noisy… Audrey momentarily looked forward to it with envy while also feeling worried and puzzled.

"Any mention of it will be known"…So the organization behind the assassination of Duke Negan, the one backer behind Qilangos was established by King of Angels Adam… Alger was first somewhat enlightened before his expression fell.

He began to suspect that the primitive island that he had previously explored was related to this secret organization. This was because Qilangos had once ventured deep into it and discovered several items. Furthermore, the final disappearance of the island had resembled the powers of the Dragon of Imagination as described by The Sun.

Putting the two together, Alger couldn't help but come up with such a theory as he made a deeper realization that Mr. Fool's cooperation with the Angel of Imagination had started when he and Gehrman Sparrow stepped into that primitive island!

He was more convinced that it was the truth because after the existence in that island's ruin "awakened," the only thing that happened was a sigh. He and Gehrman Sparrow weren't stopped from leaving.

So that's how it is… The way important figures set up their ploys are truly well-concealed. I didn't notice it at all back then… The games between gods are truly complicated. Perhaps only Sequence 1 Beyonders or even King of Angels are qualified to participate… Alger sighed as he felt a baffling sense of desire.

Fors had already forgotten the mysterious organization which Mr. Fool had mentioned previously. Only when she heard "any mention of it will be known" did she recall that it was related to Duke Negan’s assassination.

However, she wasn’t concerned about this problem but something else.

Back when she was informing Xio about the general situation of the Tarot Club and the general knowledge, she had mentioned Adam’s name!

Adam has the trait of "any mention will be known"? This… Xio and I are known by "Him"? Fors instantly felt horrified as she couldn’t help but turn her head and cast her gaze to Xio.

She had learned that Adam was the son of the Creator from Ma’am Hermit. Furthermore, she had never emphasized to not mention the King of Angels’s name in the outside world!

"I-I’ve mentioned Adam in the real world," Fors said with a clear stammer. Xio’s nerves were taut as though a venomous snake had crawled into her clothes and was sliding across her back.

Cattleya tersely acknowledged.

"No need to worry. Although not many people know of Adam and Amon, there’s no lack of them. I’ve mentioned ‘His’ name on several occasions. As long as the words you mention doesn’t involve any secrets, I believe ‘He’ will only observe you for a moment before casting ‘His’ gaze elsewhere."

She was rather certain when saying that because, in the Moses Ascetic Order that had been pursued by knowledge, Adam’s existence wasn’t a secret. People often mentioned "Him."

At this moment, her mind was filled with another matter. Could it be that the secret, ancient organization that Emperor Roselle joined was the one that King of Angels Adam established?

Fors hurriedly tried recalling and said somewhat hesitantly, "There were mentions involving the Forsaken Land of the Gods, the Giant King’s Court, Amon, King of Angels, and other knowledge. Would that be a problem?"

She was very happy that she had never mentioned the words "Tarot Club" or described the other members. At most, she mentioned that the gloomiest was Gehrman Sparrow. Cattleya thought and said, "At your Sequence, discussing knowledge at that level is indeed strange. However, if Adam were to delve deeper, he will realize that you’re related to the Abraham family. It’s quite normal to be aware of this information.

"What you need to pay attention to is that any major matters involving the Abraham family will require you to be wary of Adam."

How do I be wary of him… Fors forced a helpless smile as she glanced at the seat of honor at the long bronze table. Then, she looked back at The Hermit and said, "Thank you for your analysis."

As Mr. Fool hadn’t said anything, she decided to believe Ma’am Hermit’s words.

At this moment, Klein sighed inwardly.

Back when Cattleya mentioned Adam during the Tarot Gathering, he wasn’t aware that Adam’s name wasn’t to be verbalized, nor did he know that he was related to the Twilight Hermit Order. It was only when he entered Groselle’s Travels and learned from Ascetic Snowman about Adam being the Angel of Imagination that he grasped this point and came up with the theory.

After seeing Mr. Door’s warning from Emperor Roselle’s diary and gained preliminary confirmation, he ultimately lacked the opportunity to warn the various members. Furthermore, the way the archbishop of the Church of Steam casually mentioned Adam’s name made him believe that many people in the real world knew of Adam and that it wasn’t taboo.

Furthermore, Adam might not be "His" full name. He wasn’t in a rush to guide the conversation towards this, but he was waiting for an opportunity.

Any mention of it will be known? The organization established by Adam is really impressive… Is this the target our Tarot Club is aiming at? As Emlyn reflected over it poignantly, he gained a clear picture of the Tarot Club.

He had previously been figuring out a category for the Tarot Club. He realized that it wasn’t like an orthodox Church, and it was unlike the other secret organizations. Apart from being a messiah alliance, there wasn’t anything too special. It muddled his analysis.

And today, he finally confirmed that the early development of the Tarot Club could match Adam’s organization!

Knowing 0-08’s trait, Leonard wasn’t surprised that Adam had a similar trait. He was more concerned about the organization with many important figures participating, as well as the Abraham family which Ma’am Hermit had mentioned.

He had once heard Pallez Zoroast mention: This family’s standing in the Fourth Epoch was very high!

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CHAPTER 963
PROBLEM WITH INTELLIGENCE

According to what Leonard knew, amongst the major noble families of the Fourth Epoch's Tudor Empire, the Abraham family was ranked first. It was even stronger than the Amon family who had the Blasphemer. Of course, he couldn't be certain if the Amon family didn't have any members—that it was all filled with the son of god's avatars.

Miss Magician is actually an important member of the Abraham family… Everyone here isn't to be trifled with… Is this what's called a gathering of protagonists? Leonard first sighed before he made a self-deprecating comment.

Derrick didn't say a word, nor did he make any connections. He seriously listened to Mr. World's description, as well as the conversation between the two ladies—The Magician and The Hermit—before keeping them to heart.

To him, the other members were in the outside world. Regardless of what happened, it had little to do with him or the City of Silver. Only matters regarding the King of Angels was something to be concerned about. After all, be it the Angel of Fate Ouroboros, the Dark Angel Sasrir, and Red Angel Medici, they had left traces around the City of Silver. As for the Angel of Time, Amon, he had personally visited it before, bringing about inexplicable horror.

After everyone quietened down, Derrick couldn't help but consider certain matters.

Any mention of it will be known… How should I inform the Chief about such matters? Or is it fine not saying it for the time being? I'll just mention that Amon is a son of the Creator, that "He" has another brother who's of the same pathway as the Dragon of Imagination…

If the City of Silver were to encounter an overwhelming disaster, would Adam be able to hear it if I said "His" name? Can "He" enter the Forsaken Land of the Gods?

With this in mind, Derrick instantly felt somewhat ashamed. This was because, in such situations, the honorific name he should chant was Mr. Fool's.

At this moment, The World spoke again:

"Although War Angel Medici has long perished, 'He' isn't completely dead. The soul 'He' left behind has fused with the souls of the ancestors of the two major families of Sauron and Einhorn, forming an evil spirit. During the death of Ince Zangwill, there were traces of its appearance."

Klein had specially brought up this point to firstly pass this information to the Church of Evernight via Leonard. Secondly, it was to remind The Hanged Man to take note. After all, he had been to Bansy twice, possibly embroiling himself with the Red Angel evil spirit's fate.

That evil spirit was War Angel Medici? While Leonard was feeling alarmed, he was taken aback. He had just guessed that Adam wasn't the only bigwig who had been present!

Later, setting off from the titles of War Angel and Angel of Imagination, he suspected that the evil spirit was a King of Angels in its former life.

And such an evil spirit had been sent to the Underworld without putting up any resistance under the influence of the Luck Siphon charm!

Old Man's level is higher than I previously imagined… Yes, the evil spirit must've been weakened by Adam, and perhaps even by Mr. Fool, before Ma'am Daly and I arrived. Otherwise, it's not an enemy we could've handled… Right, what was Adam doing back then? There wasn't any sign of "Him" during the entire battle… Could it be that there was another figure at the level of a King of Angels holding back Adam? Leonard felt tumultuous waves swishing through his heart as he forgot to observe the reactions of the other members.

War Angel Medici…"He" perished and became an evil spirit… Bansy was the place "His" descendants lived…"He" was one of the founders of Rose Redemption… Alger quickly linked up the pieces of information and learned many new things.

That mural I saw in the Bansy Harbor telegraph office must've been drawn by that evil spirit!

The World Gehrman Sparrow had gotten me to head to Bansy Harbor to search for traces in order to grasp that terrifying evil spirit's location. It was to prevent his subsequent plans from being disrupted.

Thankfully, I didn't destroy that mural. Otherwise, I might've caught the notice of the evil spirit…

While Alger sighed in relief, he felt increasingly alert. He planned on getting the Blue Avenger to leave Bansy Harbor and head for the northern front of the Sonia Sea to investigate the matter Mr. Fool had previously given him.

Audrey, Cattleya, and the other members listened attentively as they kept it in mind without making too many connections. This was because the matter The World was describing contained information that mostly consisted of key and rich points. And lacking the additional experiences and knowledge, they were unable to expand on the matter.

After sharing the information that everyone needed to take note of, The World chuckled hoarsely.

"That's about it."

After a brief silence, Emlyn straightened his back and looked ahead.

"An important figure from my kind will arrive in Backlund, and a meeting with me has been arranged."

After a pause, and seeing how no one responded, he cleared his throat and asked, "How should I deal with 'Him'?"

_"Him"…Another angel… _Leonard felt numb as he noticed something: Mr. Moon had mentioned the concept of his "kind," and he had red eyes.

Leonard was taken aback as he thought to himself, *He's a Sanguine?*

Sanguine… Don't tell me he's Emlyn White from the Harvest Church? He had been close to Klein's identity as a detective!

Leonard couldn't help but look at The Moon's side profile and figure a few more times. The more Leonard looked at him, the more familiar he appeared. He was almost certain.

Without any doubts, Emlyn noticed The Star sizing him up, just as Audrey was surprised and excited to confirm that Mr. Star had suddenly realized he knew Mr. Moon.

_Did I say something wrong? That fellow, The Star, looks somewhat astonished… He knows me in the real world? Do I know him?_A series of thoughts flashed through Emlyn's mind as he subconsciously sniffed, trying to catch the scent of the new member beside him; however, the gray fog ensured that he failed.

As he surveyed the area and waited for The Hanged Man, The Hermit, and The World to provide him with an analysis and suggestion, he tried hard to recall if he had met someone like The Star.

Gradually, he felt a sense of familiarity, but he couldn't recall who it was due to the superficial impression the person left on him.

At this point, Audrey recalled another problem:

Mr. World and Mr. Star know each other, and Mr. Star knows Mr. Moon. Then, does Mr. World know Mr. Moon?

She subconsciously sized up the person at the lower end of the long bronze table, but she failed to "read" anything of use from The World Gehrman Sparrow.

As for Alger, he turned to look at The Moon after a few seconds of thought. He said with some deliberation, "Mr. Fool just mentioned that the times are changing. Although the important members of the Sanguine might not know of the ins and outs, at their level, they will more or less sense something and make preparations.

"The reason that this important figure wishes to meet you is both a probing action and surveillance. You just need to act as you usually do, but there will subsequently be some tests and missions."

As I imagined. A second test and mission will begin. I wonder what revelation the Ancestor has given… Emlyn nodded and said to The Hanged Man, "Thank you."

With the question answered, Fors, who had been holding back all this while, finally spoke:

"Mr. Moon, the intelligence you gave me regarding the abandoned ancient castle was highly problematic.

"There were two ancient wraiths, but in the underground area was a door. Sealed behind the door is a powerful corruptive power. As long as one enters the region where the ancient wraiths are, they will be corrupted."

This… Emlyn frowned slightly.

He wasn't enraged, and he instead felt that her description was completely right.

If the person who had provided the intelligence knew that there were two ancient wraiths, he wouldn't have ignored that door!

As a cultured and noble Sanguine, Emlyn never wished for anyone to incur any losses or harm because of his mistakes or neglect. He was rather perturbed by this as he thought and solemnly said, "I will investigate the source and provide you with an answer."

As Fors had returned safely, she didn't mind it too much. She tersely answered, indicating that she was awaiting the outcome.

As for being saved by Mr. Fool, with it happening once a month or even twice a month, she had already lost count. She was prepared to do anything Mr. Fool instructed her to do in the future.

After they finished their conversation, Audrey was somewhat concerned. She asked out of curiosity, "Do you know what brought about that corruptive force?"

Fors shook her head.

"I don't know."

With Mr. Fool not sharing any information, and how she didn't have any Roselle diary entries to exchange for the answer to the Card of Blasphemy, Audrey retracted her gaze and attentively listened to the conversation of the other members.

After a while, the learning segment came to an end as the Tarot Club drew to a close. The members stood up and bowed at the existence at the end of the long bronze table to bid "Him" farewell.

This time, Leonard didn't appear too slow.

The dark red light dissipated as he returned to the real world. In front of him was a Red Glove he hadn't worn.

At this moment, a slightly-aged voice suddenly sounded in his mind:

"Whose dream did you enter a moment ago?"

Old Man has woken up… Leonard was first delighted before he heaved a sigh of relief.

He didn't immediately answer Pallez Zoroast as he deliberated over an answer.

"Say, it is possible that, at certain times, Dwayne Dantès is Azik Eggers who's disguised using some particular item?"

After learning that Dwayne Dantès was a shared identity, he began doubting Old Man's original theory. This was because this Parasite had came to a conclusion based on the different appearances and auras of Azik Eggers and Dwayne Dantès. Furthermore, not every one of Mr. Fool's Blessed looked identical to Dwayne Dantès, nor were every one of them Beyonders of the Seer pathway; therefore, since a shared identity was needed, it meant that they wielded a mystical item or Sealed Artifact that allowed them to transform into someone else. Together with the ancient aura of being a Blessed causing some interference, it wasn't impossible for an angel to make an error in judgment.

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for two seconds before saying, *"You reminded me. Azik Eggers does have a mask that allows 'Him' to transform into anyone."*

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CHAPTER 964
MEDICI'S CAUSE OF DEATH

As expected… After confirming his hypothesis, Leonard didn’t harp on the matter as he returned to the topic at hand.

"Old Man, didn’t you ask whose dream I entered?

"Yes, on the day we sought revenge against Ince Zangwill, Amon’s brother and a King of Angels appeared."

In his mind, the slightly-aged voice didn’t immediately reply. After a few seconds, there was a sigh.

"It’s just as I expected. Matters related to 0-08 will often attract Adam.

"Thankfully, I chose to sleep ahead of time."

Leonard didn’t have the time to ponder over Pallez Zoroast’s words as he instinctively cried out, "Old Man, y-you said ‘His’ name!"

Adam’s gaze was about to be cast over, or might have already landed on them!

The slightly-aged voice chuckled. "You actually know about Adam’s trait… However, me mentioning ‘Him’ doesn’t matter. ‘He’ will only imagine that someone else is talking about ‘Him.’ Of course, there’s no need for you to know too much. That will definitely make you occasionally think of it. Once that happens too frequently or at a close physical distance, Adam will also know of it, just like 0-08. Furthermore, 0-08’s influence is limited to a huge city, while Adam’s is the entire world." As horrifying as Amon…

Another form of horror… Leonard composed himself and forced himself to stop thinking about Adam as he ruminated over what Pallez Zoroast had said.

Suddenly, he nearly blurted out without suppressing his voice:

"Old Man, did you sleep not because you were weak, but because you were afraid of encountering Amon’s brother?"

"Ahem." Pallez cleared "His" throat. "It was a result of both reasons, but they don’t contradict one another. After giving you the two Worms of Time, my condition deteriorated again. Under such circumstances, how am I to deal with a King of Angels and conceal my existence? I’m already old and feeble. There’s no need for such developments, so it’s almost necessary for me to hide."

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for words and said after a few seconds, "Amon and ‘His’ brother should be older than you. The ancient sun god is an ancient god before the Cataclysm…”

Without waiting for Pallez Zoroast’s reply, he heaved a sigh of relief.

"That is to say that, because of your act of sealing yourself and sleeping, that King of Angels didn’t discover a problem with me?"

Pallez chuckled.

"No, it was discovered."

"…” Leonard’s expression sank as he nearly looked around frantically.

He suspected that Adam was sitting in some corner, silently listening to his conversation with Old Man!

At this moment, Pallez Zoroast added, "You were very close to ‘Him.’ Do you think you can hide from a King of Angels who has accommodated the

Spectator pathway’s Uniqueness?

"Besides, you likely cried out ‘Old Man’ impolitely at the most critical moment."

Leonard was taken aback as he subconsciously answered, “…Y-you heard it?"

He suspected that Old Man had heard him but had deliberately chosen to ignore him for fear of being discovered by Adam.

"No." Pallez’s slightly-aged voice teased, "I don’t have to hear it to know what you would do. How can I not be aware of what kind of person you are?"

Amidst Leonard’s embarrassment, Pallez Zoroast continued, "Adam definitely knows that you’ve been parasitized, but as I’d sealed myself and was asleep, ‘He’ didn’t discover who was parasitizing you. The demigods with such abilities aren’t many, but it’s also not a very tiny number."

Is that so… Leonard instantly heaved a sigh of relief. He was most worried about having Adam see Old Man before returning to inform Blasphemer Amon.

With this in mind, Leonard raised a question he had been wondering all this while:

"Old Man, what’s a King of Angels?"

Pallez Zoroast didn’t ask where Leonard had learned of this concept as "He" simply explained, "Those that exceed Sequence 1 but have yet to become a deity.

"If we are specifically talking about the eight Kings of Angels, apart from those that meet the previous definition, they’re the ones who served the ancient sun god before the Cataclysm."

What does it mean to exceed Sequence 1 but have yet to become a deity? How is that achieved? By accommodating the so-called Uniqueness? Leonard had the intention of asking, but he suspected that Old Man wouldn’t answer in detail. He gradually decided to first talk about other matters before finding an opportunity to raise this issue again.

He deliberated for a moment and said with a suppressed voice, "During the battle for revenge with Ince Zangwill, I faced immense adversity, to the point of not being able to look at my enemy head-on, much less use the Luck Siphon charm… When seeking your help failed, I chose to chant Mr. Fool’s honorific name and had received a response.

"After everything ended, I found myself heading for an ancient palace as though I was dreaming. It was above the boundless gray fog…”

Before Leonard finished his description, Pallez, who had been listening quietly, cut him off.

"You met The Fool?"

"Yes, ‘His’ aura is vastly deeper than the sea, loftier than the mountains. His figure was cloaked in the gray fog, preventing anyone from seeing it clearly," Leonard recalled his encounter and described in a poetic manner. "‘He’ established an organization, holding a Divine Council-a true one-every Monday afternoon. I’m already one of the members."

Pallez fell silent once again and didn’t say a word for quite some time. Only after a while did he say, "The Fool allowed you to tell me this?"

"Yes." Sitting there, Leonard nodded and let out a suppressed voice into the air as he said "Old Man, do you know ‘Him?"

Pallez Zoroast sighed and said, "No, but I can roughly guess of ‘His’ origins. You don’t have to ask what it is because I won’t tell you.

"Heh heh, this might be an opportunity for you. Otherwise, it will be difficult for you to become a demigod."

Leonard turned agape before closing his mouth. He stopped mentioning the Tarot Gathering because Mr. Fool hadn’t given him permission to go into the details of other matters.

He thought and said, "Old Man, is there another King of Angels named Medici, known as ‘the War Angel’?"

Pallez tersely acknowledged:

"You can also address ‘Him’ as Red Angel. However, ‘He’ has long perished. You were even close to where ‘He’ died."

"Where?" Leonard was surprised, but he had no impression of that happening.

Pallez scoffed.

"Are the memories of you people from the Evernight pathway so terrible? I recall that your Goddess wasn’t like that.

"Do you still remember the ruin found beneath Backlund?"

"The Tudor-Trunsoest United Empire? The place where Alista Tudor became Blood Emperor?" Leonard asked in enlightenment.

Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice resounded once again:

"That’s right."

As Leonard tried to figure out the logic embedded in this matter, he informed Old Man of the evil spirit.

"The remnant soul of Medici fused with the two angels of the Sauron and Einhorn family, becoming a brand new evil spirit?" Pallez repeated Leonard's words in disbelief. Following that, "He" couldn't hide his amusement and said, "The three of 'Them' are absolute archenemies, the kind that can't stand each other's existence. To think that 'They' are together in death, fused as one, is truly–haha, it must be quite lively."

Leonard didn't know what Old Man was laughing about as he subconsciously asked, "They' are archenemies?"

Pallez held back his laughter as he said, "Yes, the reason why Medici failed and was captured was because 'He' was dealing with the Sauron ancestor who had fallen into 'His' trap.

"It wasn't that 'He' wasn't prepared, but that was mainly focused on the Primordial Demoness's side. Surprisingly, Alista Tudor suddenly went mad. Heh, on this matter, Amon and Adam had played a rather important role."

That evil spirit is an enemy of Adam… Why would the Blood Emperor want to capture Medici and the two angels of Sauron and Einhorn? The place "They" perished was in the palace where Alista Tudor was trying to become Blood Emperor…"They" were the ritual materials needed to become a true god? Hmm, according to Mr. Fool, Adam is one step closer to divinity after obtaining 0-08… Is this also considered a gathering of materials? Amon is dealing with Old Man because of similar reasons? Leonard had some theories and had the urge to ask, but he ultimately held back.

He was afraid that he touched on highly secretive matters, causing Old Man to react negatively.

He planned on finding an opportunity at the Tarot Club to ask about such matters.

After a brief silence, Leonard looked at the closed door and said with a suppressed voice, "Has Mr. Fool and the Church reached a certain degree of

tacit cooperation?"

"That’s the implication if no one is investigating you," Pallez Zoroast answered in a rather direct manner.

Leonard nodded indiscernibly.

"What will they arrange me to do next?"

"Arrangement? Reward you for the services rendered and allow you to advance to Sequence 5 after you finish digesting the potion. Then, you will be allocated a Red Gloves team, and you’ll be sent to complete missions. Otherwise, they might send you to a large diocese like Backlund to be a deacon in charge of certain matters," Pallez said without much concern.

Back to Backlund… Klein seems to be planning something in Backlund… Leonard’s thoughts were suddenly liberated.

He didn’t converse with Old Man again as he slumped against the wall and cradled his head with his hands, sitting rather leisurely.

Late at night, in the border town of East and West Balam, outside a row of warehouses.

Dressed in a formal suit, Dwayne Dantès, with his white sideburns, was holding a gold inlaid cane. After exchanging signals and countersigns with the officer on duty, he watched as the officer opened the door to the warehouse and heard him say in a relaxed manner, "It’s everything inside. Check the goods and move it yourself.

"Also, pay me the remaining amount before leaving."

Dwayne Dantès nodded slightly and weighed the suitcase in hand. In it was 5,000 pounds in cashentirely from Maysanchez’s down payment.

At this moment, two figures were silently watching this develop two warehouses away in a three-story building

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CHAPTER 965
BRIEF CRISIS

On the top floor of a small building, a black-haired, brown-eyed man donning dark-colored clothes was looking down at the arms deal not far away. This man who looked about twenty-eight couldn’t help but say, "He actually got Maysanchez? Oh, Holy Lord of Storms, Alfred, if I had known it would turn out this way, we might as well have done the mission ourselves. Even if all the expenses are deducted, we should still earn at least 20,000 pounds!"

The man beside him was a young man in a black trench coat. He looked about twenty four and had a head of resplendent blond hair and blue eyes that resembled a lake. He had pretty good looks.

Being addressed as Alfred, he shook his head and said, "No, that would be too noticeable. Maysanchez’s allegiance has always been unclear. Before figuring out his take on matters, rashly discussing an arms deal with him is extremely dangerous. Dwayne Dantès is able to earn twenty thousand pounds because he dares to take the risk."

The black-haired and brown-eyed man immediately scoffed.

"To think that Alfred Hall, who has led a few dozen men to assault a battalion with over a thousand troops, would claim that he doesn’t dare take risks!"

Alfred shot a glance at him and said, "Pagani, this isn’t the same thing. That happened because I was confident of wiping out their command center. And once there’s a lack of leadership, a thousand scattered troops might not be as formidable as a thousand pigs.

"In addition, the transaction this time is solely a test. It’s to establish communications and to set up a channel. If it’s done by us, who are we to seek out the next time? And the subsequent ones? If we keep at it, we will ultimately expose ourselves. Once that happens, it will be a diplomatic matter. Furthermore, with the deals deepening and broadening, who knows if this would incur the notice of the demigods of other factions. That would spell danger."

"Haha," Pagani said with a smile. "How can demigods be that free to pay notice to such small-scale arm deals? Every faction has a limited number of demigods. There are too many matters awaiting them."

"I know. I’m only raising an example," Alfred replied in a staid manner.

Pagani didn’t harp on the matter and turned his gaze back to Dwayne Dantès who stood outside the warehouse.

"This gentleman is said to be very generous. He donated stocks worth more than ten thousand pounds to the Church of Evernight shortly after he arrived in Backlund. Is this the early-stage investments that you often speak of?

"Also, he seems to be working at the same charity foundation with your sister. Tsk, such men are very welcome with the young ladies. He’s good-looking and has an outstanding demeanor. He’s smart, experienced, and has the artifice. He has seen all kinds of women, and he’s at the age to settle down. Alfred, you have to warn Audrey that a playboy will always be one and that one’s moral character is a flaw that can never be corrected. You can’t let the most dazzling jewel of Backlund be taken by this fellow."

Alfred turned his head to glare at Pagani.

"There’s no need for you to show any concern about such matters. Audrey isn’t a young and clueless lady. Her knowledge of the world is far more mature than you imagine. Besides, my father and mother are in Backlund. They have the ability to prevent any nasty things from happening."

Upon saying that, Alfred looked at the nearby arms warehouse and paused.

"Maysanchez actually sent Haggis. I'll go greet him."

This isn't the best time to meet, right… Just as Pagani was about to say a word, Alfred had already turned to walk down the stairs.

Klein, in the form of Dwayne Dantès, didn't bring any servants. He held his gold-inlaid cane and stood with Maysanchez's representative, Haggis, outside the warehouse. They watched as crates of munitions were carried out and loaded onto carriages.

At this moment, he half-turned his body upon sensing something and looked elsewhere.

The person that was reflected in his eyes was a young man wearing a trench coat without a hat. His blond hair was combed into a slick back, and his blue eyes looked like a lake under a bright clear sky. He was tall with a good build. His every move exuded an indescribable sense of dignity. Even without any troops surrounding him, the authority he wielded was obvious.

"Alfred!" Haggis noticed the man as well when he cried out in delighted surprise.

Alfred… Miss Justice's second elder brother… This feeling resembles that of the Arbiter pathway… Klein raised his right hand and took off his top hat to press it against his chest as a form of greeting.

After Alfred Hall greeted Haggis, he turned to look at Dwayne Dantès.

"Your character is widely spread across Backlund. Even I've heard of you, despite being in East Balam."

Character? A character at making arms deals? Klein lampooned as he chuckled.

"I’m only doing things that I believe need to be done."

Alfred nodded.

"I believe there’s no need for any self-introductions? Haggis should’ve mentioned me to you."

"Yes, Colonel Hall," Klein replied with a smile. "I only learned that Miss Audrey has another brother here in the Southern Continent after I arrived—that he served in the military and has rendered impressive services."

Alfred cast his gaze on Dwayne Dantès’s face and changed the topic:

"I thought you would take the opportunity to work at the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, but you surprised me by choosing to come to the Southern Continent."

Klein maintained his smile from before.

"For an outsider to truly enter a preexisting circle is quite impossible just by giving donations, doing charity, and hosting balls and banquets."

Alfred tersely answered, "Very wise."

After exchanging a few pleasantries, he asked Haggis, "Did something happen in Cookawa? It seemed rather serious."

Haggis squeezed a smile.

"I’m not too sure. I was hiding in an underground bunker at the general’s residence. I later heard that there was a lightning storm at Revival Square."

"Lightning storm?" Alfred’s gaze turned towards Dwayne Dantès again.

Klein nodded and said, "Indeed. The hotel I was staying at isn’t too far from Revival Square. I did see continuous bolts of lightning striking that area. All

of that happened in the day."

Alfred’s gaze turned towards Haggis again.

"What happened to the scene in the end?"

"Most of the area was in shambles. There were marks of lightning strikes." Haggis didn’t hide the truth at all.

Alfred nodded gently and pointed to the side before saying to Haggis and Dwayne Dantès, "I still have other matters to tend to. We can chat again when the opportunity arises."

"See you again," Klein politely replied. It made them appear to be at a social gathering instead of being outside a munitions warehouse.

He was watching Alfred Hall leave when his body trembled. His head made an abrupt turn to the side.

In the primitive forests that covered East and West Balam, a figure was slowly outlined with his back bent.

He had a fleshy face with slightly brown skin. His clothes were baggy, and he had a rapier by his waist. In his hand was a silver mask.

Looking to his sides, this figure straightened his body. He was none other than Admiral Hell Ludwell who had entered previously entered the Underworld.

However, at this moment, two clumps of blood-red flames were burning in his eye sockets. He looked completely different from before.

"I’m starving…” Ludwell opened his mouth, letting out a sigh that seemed to come from his chest.

He then cast his gaze in a different direction, muttering, "The owner of this marionette is over there. Fate has brought us together again.

"He has a Hunter pathway item on him. It’s perfect for replenishing myself."

Just as he said that, a bloody mouth appeared on the left cheek of Ludwell’s face. It opened and closed as it said, "Medici, what we need to deal with first is our survival! After this marionette loses its connection to its owner, it’s no different from the dead. The remnant spirit will quickly return to the Underworld and not be able to maintain the body. And without the Underworld inside him, we will inevitably be weakened until we dissipate!"

"Yes, the most pressing matter now is to find another Gatekeeper." Another mouth appeared on Ludwell’s right cheek.

Red Angel Medici immediately scoffed.

"Sauron, Einhorn, were the two of you women in the past? Your nature as angels has been left in the dumps because of you! That fellow was able to resist 0-08’s arrangements several times, implying that he’s definitely not simple. With a chance to lock onto him, how can we give it up? Once this marionette completely dies, things wouldn’t be that simple again!

"Besides, the Hunter pathway item on him can effectively extend our existence. Once we finish him, it wouldn’t be too late finding a Gatekeeper."

The bloody crack on Ludwell’s left cheek immediately scoffed.

"Medici, have you sacrificed your brain to the True Creator? That fellow has clearly advanced. In our current condition, defeating a Bizarro Sorcerer isn’t difficult, but killing him is nearly impossible!"

Medici wasn’t frustrated, and instead, he laughed deeply.

"This isn’t something unresolvable. As long as you allow me to chant my Lord’s honorific name, helpers will immediately arrive. A Gatekeeper might even be automatically brought here."

The mouth on Ludwell’s right check immediately opened and closed.

"Sauron, let’s work together to stop him and search for a Gatekeeper."

"Alright." The mouth on Ludwell’s left cheek didn’t hesitate to reply.

Upon seeing this, Red Angel Medici laughed.

"The two of you have fallen for it! My goal has been met. I can confirm that the two of you were previously women!"

The two mouths on Ludwell’s cheeks roared, "Shut up!"

"Humph, we’ve been merged together for two thousand years. Would we not know what tricks you’re up to? There’s no need to struggle again!"

As they spoke, the colors around Admiral Hell Ludwell instantly saturated and stacked upon one another.

He had entered the spirit world and began traversing

it.

Outside the munitions warehouse, Klein finally retracted his gaze as his premonition for danger vanished.

For that one moment, he had a baffling feeling, but he was unable to project the corresponding scene in his mind.

What happened? Klein muttered to himself. Without waiting any further, he threw the suitcase in his hand to the officer who was in charge of handing

and taking over. Then, he said to Haggis, "The rest is yours. You can give me the rest of the payment."

He was referring to the heavy case filled with gold bars and coins.

Haggis had planned on having drinks with Dwayne Dantès after the completion of the deal to celebrate its success, and to discuss any future deals. He never expected Dwayne Dantès to be in such a hurry to leave.

"Alright. It’s on the carriage," he pointed and said.

Alfred, who had already walked quite a distance, turned his head to look over, perplexed. He wasn’t sure why Dwayne Dantès wasn’t following the predesignated procedure.

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CHAPTER 966
TRAIN

Seeing Alfred look over, Klein returned with a smile and nodded gently.

"I suddenly sensed some danger."

With that said, he calmly turned around and headed for the carriage which Haggis had pointed out.

"Danger…” Alfred repeated the word softly as he warily surveyed his surroundings but failed to find anything odd.

He slowed down his pace, constantly taking note of his surroundings before returning to the nearby three-story building with out-of-the-ordinary vigilance.

Pagani glanced at the heavy-expression wearing Alfred and asked, feeling somewhat puzzled, "What happened?"

He was quite a distance from the arms deal, so he hadn’t heard their conversation.

Alfred walked to the window and looked down at the convoy that was prepared to leave after loading the munitions. He deliberated and said, "Dwayne Dantès suddenly left, saying that he had sensed danger."

"Danger?" Pagani didn’t dismiss it as he warily looked around. He didn’t notice anything amiss even when Maysanchez’s men left the region and vanished into the darkness.

He then laughed.

"Haha, Alfred, I think you’re too sensitive. I believe it’s solely because Dwayne Dantès is a coward and was unwilling to stay here for too long!"

Alfred retracted his gaze and frowned.

"Perhaps."

After returning to his hotel, Klein made Enzo, who had turned into a mixed-blood lad, open the suitcase in his hand. He took out the gold coins and bars one by one and did the count.

It was valued at a total of 30,000 Loen gold pounds!

Thankfully my previous agreement with Miss Messenger is 10,000 Loen gold coins. I don’t need to make any additional conversions… Sitting leisurely in the reclining chair, Klein drank the sweet and sour but refreshing Gwadar as he "monitored" his marionette’s work.

After Enzo separated the items, he took out the adventurer’s harmonica and blew into it.

Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. It was as though she was constantly nearby.

Her eight eyes turned towards the pile of gold coins and gold bars that had been separated.

After a few seconds, the four heads in Reinette Tinekerr’s hand said, "Very good…” "In the future…” "Missions will…” "Cost more…”

…What’s the logic behind this? Why are you raising the price after the mission despite me paying you so quickly? Klein was taken aback as he asked with a straightened back, "What?"

Reinette Tinekerr’s four blonde, red-eyed heads nodded seriously.

"Mission…” "Price…” "Depends On…” "Your…” "Ability…” "To…” "Earn Money…”

I never expected that… Klein turned agape, but he was unable to retort. After all, such matters were solely decided by the helper. Furthermore, with him advancing to Sequence 4 and becoming a demigod, the missions that he needed her help with in the future was likely to increase in difficulty and danger. It was seemingly reasonable to increase the price.

After Reinette Tinekerr swallowed the gold coins and vanished from the room, Klein reined in his thoughts and began doing calculations regarding his current wealth.

My expenses have been quite significant recently. I’m left with 17,275 pounds in cash and 65 gold coins… This pile of gold bars is worth 25,000 pounds… That makes for a total of more than 40,000 pounds. It’s not something to dismiss in all of the Loen Kingdom. I can already buy a manor and some land for farming… Arms dealing sure is profitable…

Reinette Tinekerr needed gold coins, so whatever was left were gold bars.

Standing up and sending the gold bars above the gray fog, Klein walked to the window and cast his gaze to the north.

With the matter coming to a close, he was poised to return to Backlund.

Looking at the horizon, Klein suddenly sighed silently.

Backlund…

North Borough, Backlund University of Technology.

Audrey was touring the campus with a few staff members of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

She was dressed in a simple, light-green dress. By her waist was a white, unadorned leather belt. Her blonde hair had a veiled hat with ribboned flowers that showed off her playful side. She didn't wear any other accessories other than a silver bangle on her left wrist. She looked no different from a female student that came from a family that could only be considered middle-class.

Over the past few days, she had been to public primary schools that bordered East Borough, and she had visited the technical schools in the area around Backlund Bridge. She already knew the appropriate clothes needed for the occasion, not treating charity work as another social scene.

Her green, limpid eyes darted around slightly as she wore a faint smile as she observed the students that came and went.

Backlund University of Technology had recently sent out its acceptance letters, and it was matriculation day for the new class of students.

Matriculation should've happened in late-August or early-September, but as a newly restructured university, Backlund University of Technology's entrance examinations were later than the other universities. That also delayed the results, which also meant that students that applied to the school had also participated in the examinations of other universities or might've already been accepted. Therefore, they had brought forward the registration work to confirm the matriculated numbers before deciding how many more students needed to be accepted.

Due to this, Audrey and the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's staff came to help the first batch of approved applicants to complete their matriculation procedure.

Wherever she could see, she discovered that the students on campus wore a beaming expression, and every action they made exuded obvious confidence. Their words and actions had an indescribable vigor, one that seemed to have immense hope for the future that allowed them to see light.

And this feeling was completely different from the few public primary schools that Audrey had experienced in the past. The students there were either boorish and noisy or silent and gloomy. A common trait of theirs was being uneasy and confused. Whenever they encountered strangers of status, they would be filled with trepidation. Their eyes were dull, lacking the spirit that youths ought to have.

I really wish those kids will have a chance of receiving higher education and be like the students here where they can work hard for a better future… As Audrey sighed silently, she swept her gaze to a male-female duo who were likely siblings.

The elder brother had clearly stepped into society and started working. He wore a silk hat and wore a rather thin black formal suit. He appeared to be in his thirties and had the air resembling a civil servant.

He had borrowed a rather old camera from somewhere and had placed it on a tripod. He gestured for his younger sister to move and adjust her pose as he searched for the best angle.

The sister was about seventeen or eighteen, and her black hair simply cascaded down. Her brown eyes had a look of exasperation, but she didn’t say a word as she seriously listened to her brother’s instructions.

Such combinations were everywhere on campus. Some of them had parents and their child, while others were groups of friends.

What a beautiful scene… Audrey looked away and continued proceeding forward.

It was a square, and in the middle of it was a decommissioned steam locomotive. Its massive body was standing there proudly, adding industrial vibes to the Backlund University of Technology.

Whoosh!

The behemoth-like steam locomotive spewed out smoke as it hauled its long body into the platform before slowing down a stop.

A mixed-blood, seven- or eight-year-old girl who looked like a doll, held her mother’s hand as she waited in a long line. She asked her father, who was similarly mixed-blood with Loen and Balam heritage, about Desi Bay.

Amidst her shuffling, she saw a gentleman with white sideburns and a top hat holding a gold-inlaid cane. He had a servant with brown skin as he walked towards first-class.

The servant looked around curiously and said, "Sir, the recent situation is different from what I had imagined. I thought the people from Balam would lead tough and difficult lives, with squalid, chaotic, poor, and repressed surroundings. But there was none of them. We even drank Gwadar and smoked East Balam cigarettes. There were even some people who could afford bikes. Uh, as you know, although I have Balam blood in me, I was born in Backlund. I’ve never been to the Southern Continent. Of course, my Dutanese is still not too bad."

The very noble middle-aged gentleman chuckled and waved his cane.

"That’s because we only went to the cities and regions that aren’t too bad. The saddest people of Balam are in the villages, in the plantations. The rest take up residence around the factories, creating slums. We never had a chance to see them."

As though sensing the girl’s notice, the gentleman with his deep blue eyes and his servant looked over and gave a warm smile.

The corners of their lips clearly curled up, revealing eight teeth before they nodded gently, looked away, and continued on their way.

Before long, the girl and her parents boarded the steam locomotive and found their seats.

When the whistle sounded again, the girl saw a man with dark brown skin, soft facial features, and red lumps on his cheek walk over with his head bowed. His hand pressed on his hat as he quickly walked down the aisle and headed for the head of the train.

The man knocked on the partition before quickly entering the operator’s compartment and said to the train driver, "All the train attendants have been swapped with our men. The bridge ahead is where the sacrifice will be held."

With a thick mustache, the train driver nodded and said, "May God be satisfied with the sacrificial items on this train.

"Let’s hope we can gain eternal life in the kingdom."

Whoosh!

The steam locomotive drove under a bridge before cruising past a huge bridge. After a long trip, it finally arrived at its destination, the pier.

The doll-like, mixed-blood girl was somewhat sleepy and was no longer as lively as before. Under her parents’ lead, she followed the crowd and inched towards the door.

There were a few attendants at the door who were helping some of the passengers remove their luggage.

When the girl and her parents walked past, these attendants curled the corners of their lips and revealed eight teeth, showcasing a warm smile.

After the girl jumped onto the platform, she looked back at them subconsciously. She saw figures standing outside the door, discussing something. Among them was the train conductor, as well as the man with the lumps on his cheek.

A second later, these people turned their heads over and curled the corners of their lips, revealing eight teeth.

The girl retracted her gaze and skipped along as she left the platform with her parents.

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CHAPTER 967
"REVELATION"

Cold winds blew across the platform at night, causing the hanging gas lamps to sway.

The light of dusk stretched and shortened from time to time in this scene, allowing the steam locomotive that was silently parked on the tracks to oscillate between being cloaked in shadows or escaping the darkness. It had an indescribable sense of gloom and death.

At this moment, a squad of black-and-white checkered policemen entered the platform. Under the lead of the railway company’s duty manager, they walked to the huge train that appeared old.

"For some reason, after the passengers disembarked, all the train staff, including the train driver, returned to the carriage and never came out again. I s-sent people to look for them and get them out to have some rest, b-but they quickly ran out looking like that had been inflicted with a disease. All they could do was hysterically shout, ‘they’re all dead,’ ‘they’re all dead’!" The railway duty manager in a blue coat held a lamp, walking as he briefed the police about the situation.

From his stammering and trembling body, the police could easily tell the extreme horror in him. It was as though a sudden tap on his shoulder would literally cause him to jump and abandon everything to rush for the exit.

His emotions infected the police. All of them held their hands to their waists as they pressed onto their holsters.

Tap. Tap. Tap. The leather shoes hitting the solid, hard ground left reverberating echoes. The police followed the duty manager and warily entered the front carriage.

Inside the carriage, there were two people sitting in each row. They were distributed to the left and right, and they stood away from the windows. At that moment, they were leaning against the backs of their seats, motionless.

Through the illumination of the gas lamps outside and lanterns in their hands, the inspectors leading them very quickly recognized the scene before him. Here were the staff of the steam locomotive. They were wearing blue uniforms that differed for men and women, and they were sitting in different seats in silence. Their faces were pale and their eyes wide open. Although there wasn’t any sounds of breathing, the corners of their lips were curved up, revealing eight teeth.

Everyone present felt their hair stand up upon seeing the uniform smiles as they subconsciously held their breaths.

This was an extremely bizarre and terrifying scene. All they wished was to turn around and leave, beginning investigations only when it was bright!

The leading inspector drew two deep gasps before he instructed the constables beside him:

"Go confirm if they a-are dead…”

Upon saying that, he glanced at the duty manager.

"Follow him and see if there’s anyone missing or excess people included."

"A-alright, Officer," the duty manager said with a trembling voice.

As he and the constables ventured deeper into the carriage, the other policemen drew their revolvers and remained on high alert.

In an unbearable silence, time slowly ticked by until, finally, one of the constables stopped at the end of the carriage, turned around, and shouted, "It’s confirmed. All of them are dead!"

The railway manager stuttered immediately after him, "There are two missing. The train driver and the train conductor…”

The inspector calmed down significantly when he realized that nothing had happened all this time. he thought and said to all the constables, "Maintain the corpses’ present state and await an autopsy.

"Meanwhile, split into two teams. One team is to head to the other carriages to search for the train conductor and driver while the other team is to check the scene for clues and relevant information. Once the sun rises, we will begin investigations starting with the train personnel and the passengers who were previously on board. We will search for any commonalities and peculiarities."

Although many passengers didn’t present their identification documents when purchasing tickets, the inspector believed that it was possible to find people who had registered themselves and learn from them of any abnormalities on the train or passengers worth paying attention to.

Just as he said that, a biting cold wind stirred, blowing through the carriage.

When all of this came to an end, the inspector was about to emphasize his orders when he suddenly noticed something amiss.

The steam locomotive staff members who were in their seats still had their eyes open with their whites showing and their faces pale. However, their mouths had closed at some point in time and were no longer showing their eight teeth.

Inside a luxurious hotel room, the wall lamps shone brightly onto the carpeted region where a desk stood.

Klein had transformed into Gehrman Sparrow and was sitting on a single-seater. He had his left leg crossed over his right.

Beside him was Enzo who looked like a native. In front of him stood a row of cultist marionettes.

They were the people involved in attempting to make a sacrifice on the steam locomotive—the man with the lumpy cheek, the train conductor and the train driver.

They had circled from different streets donning different looks to gather here.

"Who made you do the sacrifice?" Klein asked in a deep voice.

After advancing to Sequence 4 and becoming a Bizarro Sorcerer, not only was he able to read the thoughts of his marionette’s superficial consciousness, he could also use the increased control of Spirit Body Threads to do things similar to spirit channeling.

Of course, the higher the level of the marionette, the poorer the effects of the spirit channeling.

After a brief silence, the conductor who was clearly Loen with rather thick body hair said blankly, "It’s a revelation from God."

"Which god?" Klein received the porcelain teacup from Enzo and took a sip.

The train conductor replied in a daze, "God is God. There are no others."

Klein lowered his cup and asked, "How did ‘He’ reveal ‘His’ revelation? What was said exactly?"

The conductor instantly turned reverent.

"He’ gave a revelation through a divine item, requesting us to sacrifice many lives to pleasure ‘Him.’ In return, ‘He’ will give us eternal life in ‘His’ kingdom."

Sacrifice many lives… Compared to the Numinous Episcopate, the Rose School of Thought prefers doing such things. They have always been infamous for blood sacrifices… But to have eternal life in God’s kingdom is closer to the Numinous Episcopate’s beliefs. Of course, I can’t eliminate the possibility that it was fabricated… Klein pondered for a moment and asked, "What divine item?"

The train driver didn’t reply as he glanced at the man with the red, lumpy cheek.

The man then took out an item from an inner pocket.

It was a cloth doll of shabby craftsmanship with curved eyes and mouth.

"God will issue us commands at a specific time through it. I bought it at a flea market," the man with the lumpy cheek said slowly without any perturbation in his tone.

This… Klein instantly thought of many possibilities before getting Enzo to take the cloth doll and scrutinize it carefully, but he didn’t discover anything odd.

With his experience, this meant that the problem wasn’t with the doll. That meant that there were two possibilities: First, someone was using the doll as a decoy while acting as a deity nearby. Second, it was a truly secret existence who had specially labeled the item to send a revelation.

If it’s the former, the train attendants’ death would’ve been discovered, and preparations would’ve been made… If it’s the latter, perhaps nothing has been detected… Klein contemplated for a moment and made Enzo place the cloth door on the desk in front of the window.

He then stood up and instantly transformed into another train attendant and stood with the row of cultists.

Similar changes happened when Enzo returned.

After an unknown period of time, the night grew deeper.

Suddenly, on the desk bathed in crimson moonlight, the cloth doll with curved eyes and mouth moved its limbs and slowly stood up.

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CHAPTER 968
"DESCENDING" SAINT

The cloth doll turned its lifeless eyes before its body stood up straight. It looked towards the area that the crimson moonlight failed to illuminate. There, the man with the lumpy cheek and the other cultists had been standing quietly, but at this moment, they bowed their heads, raising their arms as though they were praying, piously listening to the "revelation."

About two to three seconds later, the cloth doll finally stood up straight. Just as it was about to open its tongueless mouth and produce a voice that didn’t belong to the "body" it was in, all its movements suddenly turned sluggish, as though it was a highly-rusted robot.

Hidden amongst the cultists, Klein had seen a strange spirituality thread extend from the cloth doll. Without any hesitation, he began controlling it!

Inside the wall lamp-illuminated room, the lights dimmed instantly. The doll with curved eyes and mouth instantly lost the support that seemed to arise from having a skeleton before slumping to the table, motionless.

Amidst the flickering street lights that were more than a thousand meters away, Klein lost control over the blob of Spirit Body Threads. The power that descended with the help of the doll took less than two seconds to escape out of his range!

Whoosh!

A biting-cold wind swept up inside the room as the rug with tables and chairs above was suddenly tugged, sending the man with the lumpy cheek

and most of the other cultists tumbling. Only the disguised Klein had jumped up in time to avoid the accident.

Of course, Winner Enzo stood perfectly fine at the border of the rug, completely unaffected.

Whoosh!

Amidst the cold wind, the rug rolled up and bound the few cultists and covered their noses and mouth tightly, gripping their throats.

Meanwhile, the fountain pens on the table had their caps removed autonomously before shooting forward, stabbing into the neck of the man with the lumpy cheek. They left no gaps in the dense array of pens.

A wooden chair exploded as its splinters swept over without sparing any of the remaining cultists.

Near the wall, the pipe of a wall lamp cracked, causing the gas inside to whistle out.

The cloth that draped the sofa rose up, tied itself into a robe, and wrapped around the train conductor’s throat. A few of the floor tiles flew up, stabbing a few cultists from below.

Instantly, all the items in the room were filled with offensive capability as though they were attempting to kill all signs of life inside.

Klein tried to dodge, but his shirt, pants, belt, coat, and hat seemed to have a life of their own. They forcefully locked him down on the spot.

He hurriedly opened his mouth and let out a sound: "Pa!"

He had mimicked the sound of snapping fingers.

Scarlet flames surged out from his clothes, instantly blanketing his body and removing the restraints

At this moment, the cloth on another sofa rose up as though it was draped over someone.

This strange scene reflected in Klein’s eyes immediately as he trembled and turned stiff. He had been possessed by an evil spirit!

The flames that soared up from before hadn’t extinguished. They were burning away his clothes and flesh, only to reduce him to a pitch-black paper figurine.

Behind this paper figurine was a pattern covered with feathers. It was a surreal and illusory feeling.

This was the mutated paper figurine that had been tainted with Artificial Death’s aura!

Klein knew that there were only two situations that were possible for the doll to mutate. One was that the entity disguising as a god was nearby and had sensed the deaths of the cultists; hence, preparations were made via a deliberate descent, laying a trap for the antagonist. Another was that the one using the doll was indeed some secret existence. "He" wasn’t aware that the sacrificial ritual had been foiled and descended at the predetermined time to give the next round of "revelations."

And regardless of which situation it was, it meant danger. Therefore, how could Klein perform unprepared?

Based on the characteristics of a descent or the possession of the doll, he had already placed the paper figurine, which had mutated because of the corruption of Artificial Death’s aura, in the iron cigar case. He had also maintained the level of his marionette at the level of an ordinary person in order to lure the target into possessing him!

At this point, the possession target of the "god" that the cultists worshiped had gone from Klein to the Death Paper Figurine! As the scarlet flames swept about, the pitch-black paper figurine ignited as a pale-white color spread abruptly, tinged with a slightly dark green color.

A rather painful grunt sounded as a transparent afterimage flashed across a window tinted with the crimson moonlight.

Almost at the same instant, the items that came "alive" inside the room fell to the ground, returning to their lifeless state. As for Enzo, flames were swirling around him.

At this moment, in the port city north of the Southern Continent, the residents were enjoying the comfort and warmth of their home and family at night. They didn’t notice that their glass windows and the surfaces of the wall lamps would dim before quickly returning to normal.

Alongside this dimming environment, the flames in the fireplace either intensified or dwindled. The remnants in the kitchen were ignited and snuffed out.

During this process, the glass windows in that room dimmed the most, and the fluctuations in the flames kept happening. However, the believers in the room were praying to the Primordial Moon, paying no notice to what was happening.

After an unknown period of time, the crimson moonlight brightened a little, as though covering the entire city in a light veil.

Such brightness quickly returned to normal as a scarlet red flame flared up on a silver candle on a dining table.

Enzo walked out of it as his body and face rapidly changed into Gehrman Sparrow.

Just moments ago, at the instant when the crimson moon brightened, he had lost his target.

Not only possessing the Beyonder powers of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Wraith pathway, but they can also borrow the power of the crimson moon… Regarding these two aspects, one of them is only possible with a Sealed Artifact or mystical item… Klein muttered silently and came to a preliminary judgment.

After the demigod who possessed the doll had been corrupted by the Death Paper Figurine, he had believed that he had the chance to take his opponent down. To his surprise, the enemy's strength and means available to them were more varied and potent than he imagined.

The only thing he could confirm was that it wasn't an angel, as the strength and level were far inferior to one.

Just as this thought flashed through his mind, Klein left the dining room and entered the activity room. There were a few believers praying to the Primordial Moon.

Unlike the cultists on the steam locomotive, they knew who they were praying to, as though they were more formal members of the parish.

One step. Two steps. Three steps. Klein entered the room in an unhurried pace before they turned their heads when they noticed him.

With the powerful illusion power of a Bizarro Sorcerer, they treated Gehrman Sparrow as an oracle that had descended upon them. They saw a bright moon halo at his head.

The believers plopped to their knees in devout prostration.

Klein didn't beat about the bush as he asked in a deep voice, "Who was the saint you met previously?"

Although one of the believers was puzzled, he still respectfully answered, "Oracle, it was Shaman King Klarman."

Shaman King Klarman… That’s a familiar name… Ah right, the author of that Book of Secrets… Isn’t he long dead? He was alive in a time over a millennium ago. Saints of non-special pathways have no way of living that long… He joined the Rose School of Thought but still believes in the Primordial Moon. Through some means, he has extended his life? Or could it be that his Sequence alone affords him a long life? Klein’s mind whirred and recalled the origins of the name "Klarman."

A sailboat was docked by the pier as the faint moonlight illuminated the cabin’s interior.

A figure with frizzled black hair with white streaks in them walked out of a mirror. He wore a back robe with crimson patterns. He had wrinkles that were neither too deep or shallow on his face. His eyes were bloodshot.

At this moment, on the skin he exposed, such as the back of his hand, his pores had expanded, producing white feathers that were stained with pale yellow oil.

This elder’s expression was somewhat warped as if he was enduring pain.

He quickly sat on the bedside, bowed his head, clasped his hands, and silently chanted.

In his jarring voice, his forehead slowly cracked apart, revealing a red full moon that seemed to be embedded in it!

The moonlight dispersed and cloaked the elder, causing the white feathers on him to contract and recede into nothingness.

But at this moment, his abdomen bloated up as though it was filled with liquid.

Finally, his clothes, together with his skin, tore apart as a blob of flesh and blood covered in white feathers flew out onto the deck. After squirming for quite a while, it rotted and died.

Phew… The elder looked up and slowly exhaled. His bloodshot eyes were filled with puzzlement.

He muttered softly, "Death’s Blessed?

"But Death is no more…”

Early in the morning, the Church of Storms’s Mandated Punishers, who had taken over the case of the mysterious deaths of the steam locomotive’s staff, had received new intelligence.

The missing conductor and driver, as well as a few suspicious passengers, had been found!

Before long, this Mandated Punisher team followed the clues and found their targets.

They were silently hung outside a building in a row.

"This is a provocation!" The Mandated Punisher’s captain growled through clenched teeth.

But after they lowered the corpses and carried out their investigations inside the room, they saw that these people had been piously praying to the Primordial Moon in the activity room, holding a rather diabolical ritual.

“…Apprehend all of them!" The Mandated Punisher captain issued a command after a second of surprise.

The believers of the Primordial Moon seemed to regain their reason as they tried to resist. However, they were quickly suppressed, either dying or being injured in the process.

The Mandated Punisher captain surveyed the area and inexplicably said to his peers, "They didn’t notice the row of corpses hanging at their doorstep?"

A member of the Reader pathway thought and said, "Those corpses might’ve been left there to guide us to investigate the area."

The Mandated Punisher captain calmed himself down and nodded in thought, "Which Church’s demigod passed by?"

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CHAPTER 969
DUKE

Backlund, West Borough, within the Odora family’s villa.

Emlyn White, who had been summoned, took off his hat and coat and entered the activity room to wait.

In this room, there were a few other Sanguine members who had been called by name to meet the important figure. After surveying the area, Emlyn picked a spot to sit in, right beside a man with a nose so high that it almost seemed deformed.

Adorning his cut face was brown hair and red eyes. He held a comic in his hand, reading through it aimlessly.

He was none other than the Sanguine who had provided Emlyn with the information about the ancient, abandoned castle in Delaire Forest. His name was Ernes Boyar, a viscount.

Emlyn had planned on visiting this viscount in the next couple of days, but he never expected to bump into him here. After some careful consideration, he said in deliberation, "Your Lordship, I would like to know where you obtained the intel regarding the ancient abandoned castle in Delaire Forest."

"Why? Did your client say that there weren’t any ancient wraiths?" Ernes Boyar moved his gaze away from his comic and shot Emlyn a glance.

"No, not at all." Emlyn didn’t provide an explanation as he stubbornly emphasized his question again. "I’m just very curious of the source. It doesn’t seem that simple."

Ernes Boyar closed his comic and nodded slightly.

"It’s not a secret. I learned of it from Lord Nibbs. To be frank, I’ve never heard of this before. I find it hard to imagine that there’s such an ancient castle in Delaire Forest."

Lord Nibbs… Emlyn instinctively had some thoughts arise in him.

It’s another test…

But isn’t such a test too dangerous? It even needed Mr. Fool to resolve it… Emlyn frowned slightly as he recalled the details he had contemplated previously. He probed, "Your Lordship, then why didn’t you explore that ancient castle? I remember you being an archaeologist. And during this process, you’ll be able to obtain the corresponding Beyonder ingredients of an ancient wraith."

"Lord Nibbs told me that it’s very dangerous. One shouldn’t approach it unless they’re at the level of Earl."

"…” Emlyn’s mouth gaped as his expression fell into a daze.

He then held back his anger and asked with a suppressed voice, "Then why didn’t you warn me?"

Ernes laughed.

"Isn’t it obvious?

"How can a location with Beyonder creatures present, one that’s known by us Sanguine, still exist if not for special reasons?"

Emlyn fell into a daze as Ernes added, "Normal reasoning should be like this: Ancient wraiths might exist in some place in Delaire Forest. People have encountered it before, but they were unable to find their origins.

"This means that finding those ancient wraiths is a very difficult and troublesome affair. The time cost exceeds their value, which allows them to live to this day.

"I thought you'd have easily discovered the problem with this reasoning. Likewise for your client. If they had chosen to take action, they must've had possessed the corresponding confidence."

At that instant, Emlyn felt that Viscount Ernes made plenty of sense, and he could hardly rebut him. He believed that it was because he and Miss Magician were too foolish, resulting in her slamming headfirst into danger. It had nothing to do with him.

The next instant, Emlyn felt embarrassed and frustrated, filled with anger towards himself.

Finally, Emlyn figured out another problem:

Regardless of whether the intel exposes any danger or not, Ernes Boyar should've clearly informed me of this point because figuring out the level of danger, the source of danger, and how the danger manifested itself. It held immense importance in the subsequent exploration, one that can't be missed!

He did it on purpose! Emlyn came to a final conclusion as his scarlet eyes narrowed. He raised his chin and said, "Indeed. It's easy to tell, but I'm more curious about the danger lurking in that ancient abandoned castle."

Ernes picked up the black tea that nearly resembled the color of blood and sipped it.

"I'm not sure either. Lord Nibbs didn't mention anything."

Emlyn's expression sank. Just as he was about to make a derisive remark, he suddenly saw Odora Cosmi walk into the activity room and look at him.

"Emlyn, it’s time for the meeting."

"Alright." Emlyn reined in his emotions and pressed onto the bottom half of his vest, standing up unhurriedly.

Following him down the stairs underground, he finally couldn’t help but softly ask, "Baron Cosmi, who am I actually meeting? How should I address ‘Him?"

Cosmi, who looked like a middle-aged gentleman, didn’t hide the truth. He replied with deep respect, "Duke Olmer."

Duke Olmer… Emlyn subconsciously straightened his back and cast his gaze to the lamps on the wall. He appeared to use the reflection of the metal surface to check on his appearance.

"He" was one of the three dukes that held up the Sanguine, an ancient powerhouse who existed before the Cataclysm. His title was "Round Moon," with an age exceeding three thousand years. He had once followed in the footsteps of Ancestor Lilith!

Without a doubt, this was synonymous with the history and glory of the Sanguine!

After passing several secret doors, Emlyn and Cosmi arrived inside a metal-gray hall.

The ground and walls were filled with green grass, flowers, and grain. Insects were crawling between the plants, making Emlyn feel as though he had left the city and arrived somewhere rural. He felt life thriving all around him.

Such a scene didn’t seem too odd, but on careful inspection, there were many strange points.

The grass had mouth-like crevices with fibers flying out of them to capture the insects. The flowers used their leaves as hands to harvest pollen for themselves. The grains were heavy, occasionally emitting wailing from inside. There was a myriad spectrum of extraordinary insects. Some had snakes for heads, others birds.

These things grew lusher the closer it was to the middle of the hall. Surrounding the area was a grave filled with exuberant spirits.

Cosmi faced the grave and reverently bowed.

"Your Grace, Emlyn White is here."

"Good afternoon, Your Grace." Emlyn didn’t don his usual arrogance and was, in fact, a little flustered.

Inside the grave, a mellow voice which didn’t betray its owner’s age chuckled.

"A very outstanding young Sanguine.

"Cosmi, you may leave for now."

"Yes, Your Grace." Cosmi bowed in response and left the metal-gray hall that was filled with freshness.

Emlyn stood there, listening to the mellow voice from the grave.

"In the morning, Nibbs informed me that you obtained the Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic that corresponds to the viscount title?"

"Yes, but it has been corrupted and requires purification." Emlyn hadn’t mentioned the need to remove the mental corruption in the Beyonder characteristics, because he believed that it was a trivial matter to the Sanguine. At the very least, Baron Cosmi had previously confirmed that it was possible.

Olmer tersely acknowledged.

"Very well. I'll personally purify that characteristic."

"He" paused before saying, "Although the Sanguine enjoy a long life, we will still mature and grow old. There will be new births and deaths. Regardless, nurturing young members is a necessity for any race. As for the excellent talent and outstanding abilities you have recently showcased, they have made you a target we place great importance on. Therefore, I personally came to meet you to give you some tests so as to expedite your growth." Excellent talent and outstanding abilities… Emlyn raised his chin slightly higher once again.

He then sighed inwardly.

Indeed, just as Mr. Hanged Man determined, there will be a test and mission, as well as an interview…

Amidst his overflowing emotions, Emlyn replied reverently, "I'm always prepared."

"Not bad," Olmer's mellow voice sounded from the grave. "Your next mission is to find the key members of the Rose School of Thought that are hiding in Backlund. There are very few clues for this, and many situations will require you to carry out the investigation by yourself."

Rose School of Thought? They have a grudge with us Sanguine? They seemed to be taking in some believers of the Primordial Moon? Emlyn actually knew quite a bit about the Rose School of Thought via the Tarot Club, but he deliberately hid this without showcasing it.

"Apart from taking in believers of the Primordial Moon, they have in their possession one of the holy artifacts of us Sanguine. It was something left by the Ancestor. We need to retrieve it." There was a solemnity in Olmer's voice.

Left by the Ancestor… Holy artifact of the Sanguine… Emlyn didn’t hesitate to say, "Your Grace, I’ll work hard to find the key members of the Rose School of Thought in Backlund."

Olmer’s voice turned mellow.

"Very good. Get some of the intel from Cosmi in a while and seek out an incisive point."

Emlyn was already eager to do so, but he still restrained himself, asking in deliberation, "Your Grace, do you know about the abandoned ancient castle in Delaire Forest?"

"You wish to head there? It’s very dangerous," Olmer said from inside the grave.

Emlyn didn’t explain as he directly asked, "What kind of danger?"

Olmer chuckled.

"That ancient castle might be older than me, even older than Delaire Forest.

"I do not know who built it. I only know that there’s something sealed underground, and it hides an immense secret.

"Any creature that approaches it will be in danger of being corrupted by the force within. We once imagined that it has something to do with the Abyss, but a Devil suffered corruption after being thrown into the ancient castle as well, turning crazy and chaotic from his cold and cruel demeanor."

Then why didn’t you attempt to open the seal to figure out the situation? Emlyn mumbled inwardly but didn’t say a word.

Olmer didn’t speak further as "He" ended the conversation and dismissed Emlyn.

In the evening, Backlund was covered with dark clouds as a drizzle began falling.

Emlyn White wore a hat and walked under a sheltered veranda, his scarlet eyes locked onto Viscount Ernes Boyar who was browsing some antique stores.

He was upset that Ernes had given him incomplete intelligence, so he had subconsciously tailed him after leaving the Odora villa.

But after a while, he felt lost. He hadn’t figured out how to deal with Ernes or how severe a lesson he should teach him.

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CHAPTER 970
TALENT AT SOLICITING DONATIONS

After blankly following Ernes Boyar for a distance, Emlyn White gradually abandoned his thoughts.

He glanced at the area beyond the veranda as the downpour grew in intensity. He couldn't help but think, How should I punish Ernes? Although he had done so because he likely followed orders or a cue, it's still despicable!

As for Lord Nibbs… I presently do not have the ability. But wait, once I become a marquis or a duke, I'll definitely make him pay the price!

Miss Magician has already completed her exploration of the ancient abandoned castle. I'm not sure if Lord Nibbs had sent Sanguine to monitor the area… From her tone, description, and the feedback given by Mr. Fool, there was probably no monitors… Could it be that Lord Nibbs didn't send any Sanguine to the vicinity of the ancient castle? But what's the point of such a test? Or could it be that they missed it because of some problems?

Amidst his thoughts, Emlyn White felt that he needed to get someone to discuss the matter of punishing Ernes Boyar. He was severely lacking in such experience.

Subconsciously, the first candidate of choice that came to him was The Hanged Man. This senior member of the Tarot Club was shown to be extremely experienced in various matters. He was extraordinarily reliable and had never left the other members disappointed.

After hesitating for a few seconds, Emlyn struck down this choice. This was because this matter involved the Sanguine's internal test. To consult the Tarot Club members before he obtained an answer damaged his pride and overall image of the Sanguine!

By the same reason, he eliminated The World as a choice.

Of course, he believed he could guess the suggestion that The World would give: Kill him!

There's no need to go that far… Emlyn mumbled inwardly. As he aimlessly tailed Ernes Boyar, he began expanding the candidates to the real world.

Then, he realized he didn't have anyone to choose from. He almost had zero friends.

Eliminating his parents who were Sanguine as well, he only had two or three people in mind. They were the Harvest Church's Father Utravsky and Detective Sherlock Moriarty, who had a mysterious background and a myriad of means at his disposal.

Sherlock hasn't returned after leaving Backlund. Sigh, I can only seek out Father Utravsky tomorrow. But I can't be that direct… Emlyn quickly made up his mind. He walked past Ernes Boyar, who entered a watch shop, and headed for the end of the veranda where there were several rental carriages.

Getting in the carriage, he felt the wheels turning. He casually glanced out the window and saw more raindrops striking the glass, drawing out trails that streaked down.

In his blurred vision, carriages drove past.

Audrey retracted her gaze from the rainy scene outside the carriage and glanced at her lady's maid, Annie, before communicating with Susie silently.

The look in her eyes, her expression, and her not obvious body language said: We’re almost home. I’m a little nervous.

On the ground, Susie shook her tail, raised her paw, and adjusted the gold-rimmed glasses hanging by her neck. Together with the changes in the colors of her Ether Body and Body of Heart and Mind, she expressed herself:

Don’t worry. That Ma’am Escalante, who’s a psychiatrist on the surface, is only a Telepathist. She won’t be able to see through your lies.

Audrey nodded gently and watched her carriage enter the Hall family’s luxurious villa and stop in front of the sheltered foyer.

Ever since joining the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation, she had begun spending less time at home. She had originally planned on meeting Ma’am Escalante from the Psychology Alchemists at 22 Phelps Street in North Borough, but since Mr. Dwayne Dantès had left for the Southern Continent and wasn’t in the foundation, there was no need for that.

In the study she called her own, Audrey met Ma’am Escalante Oseleka who had black hair reaching her waist and a baby face.

"I must apologize. I’d been busy meeting up with friends after returning to Backlund. My subsequent joining of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation has delayed my meeting with you until today." After leaving Susie outside, Audrey elegantly bowed to express her attitude. In fact, this has been deliberate. By dragging out their meeting for about a month, her digestion of the Psychiatrist potion and advancement to Hypnotist became rather reasonable. It was the progress one would expect from a genius and nothing else.

Escalante returned the greeting without much thought.

"I heard that you have been busy with children who desire knowledge. Your virtues are more dazzling than diamonds."

As Audrey gestured for her to sit, she walked to a single-seater and tersely acknowledged.

"Those children are in situations I've never seen before. There's often a voice inside me that's urging me to do something. Ma'am Escalante, if you're free, you can join me and the staff of the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation to go visit the different schools. There, you will get to see what most children in the world are experiencing."

Having said that, she chuckled as though being self-deprecatory.

"I apologize. I've recently been accustomed to kick-start such topics. It's because I wish for more nobles and the wealthy to involve themselves in such charities. I hope they can donate more to help even more children."

After hearing Audrey, Escalante replied somewhat uncomfortably, "I will do so. I'll also donate some money to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation."

"No, I'm not forcing you to donate. This has to be an action that comes from the heart, and something voluntary. I only wish for you to take a look and then inform the people around you of these children's plight and their possible futures. This includes the members of the Psychology Alchemists." Audrey shook her head, rejecting Escalante's suggestion.

"Alright." Escalante first nodded gently in agreement before feeling that there was something ridiculous in this matter: Miss Audrey's true motives were to solicit donations from the Psychology Alchemists.

But this was a secret, extraordinary underground organization!

This was no different from soliciting donations from the Aurora Order!

Audrey didn't continue discussing matters related to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Instead, she said, "Ma'am Escalante, I have something I'd like to inform you of."

"What is it?" Escalante "read" the solemnity, joy, and pride from her actions and emotions.

Audrey smiled and said, "I've already become a Hypnotist."

"…" At that moment, Escalante suspected that Audrey had hypnotized her.

Although she knew that Audrey had obtained the Hypnotist potion formula previously, how long ago was that?

"You should be able to determine that I'm not lying," Audrey said with a smile.

Only then did Escalante snap to her senses as she asked in surprise and doubt, "You seem to have some extraordinary encounter?"

"It's to have the courage to make use of matters," Audrey said things that couldn't be any truer.

Escalante frowned and said with some hesitation, "You wish for the Sequence 5 potion formula?"

"Yes. What do I need to do, or what price needs to be paid?" Audrey didn't hide her motives.

Escalante looked at the beautiful, blonde, and green-eyed lady in front of her and deliberated.

"This isn't something that's up to me to decide. I will report it and try to arrange for you to meet with Hilbert and Stephen."

She was referring to psychologist ad jewelry designer, Hilbert Alucard, and furniture merchant, Stephen Hampres.

Clearly, in this group of Psychology Alchemists members, Escalante was in a subordinate position.

Audrey wasn’t surprised by Escalante’s reaction, but this didn’t mean that her handling of matters wasn’t without a problem.

A Sequence 6 Beyonder who had the wish to advance was someone that required deep importance to be attached to in any secret organization. This was even the case with the orthodox Churches. They were people who were qualified to meet high-ranking members directly!

This also meant that, after advancing to Hypnotist, Audrey was already an elite in the middle-ranking members of the Psychology Alchemists. Her next goal was to become a quasi high-ranking member. The person she needed to meet was a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists’ Council, and not Hilbert or Stephen.

As her thoughts flashed across her mind, Audrey deliberately showed some of her displeasure.

Escalante acutely noticed this and hurriedly explained, "Meeting Hilbert and Stephen is to confirm your condition before a councilor meets you.

"In fact, with your present level, you should be leading a team and recruiting new members. But with your identity, status, and daily environment, we have canceled that plan, afraid that it would influence your normal day-to-day life."

Councilor… I wonder how many councilors from the Psychology Alchemists there are in Backlund… Could it be the royal family’s consultant, Hvin Rambis? Audrey nodded in thought and said, "I can understand that and will await your arrangements."

She then diverted the topic and asked with a curious look, "Ma’am Escalante, do you know what’s the name of the Sequence 5 potion of the Spectator pathway?"

Seeing this blonde, green-eyed, young noble lady taking on such a demure pose, Escalante silently heaved a sigh of relief.

"I’ve once heard Hilbert mention that it’s called Dreamwalker."

Dreamwalker… This is somewhat different from what I imagined. Or it could be that "dream" is just an analogy. To be precise, it should be Subconscious Walker? Audrey didn’t conceal her contemplation and analysis before directing her questions to psychology and various information.

After having Escalante stay for dinner, she sent the lady to the door where she got on a carriage.

At this moment, it was dark outside with gales roaring and rain pouring.

Amidst the pouring rain, howling winds, and the dark night, a steam sailboat hybrid was cruising through the safe sea route in the Berserk Sea with tourists on board.

Klein had already left the Southern Continent and had returned to Desi Bay as Dwayne Dantès.

Amidst the shaking ship, he suddenly woke up, got out of bed, and headed to the window of his first-class cabin’s living room to look outside.

Amidst the downpour, three huge strange pure-black sailboats were silently cruising over.

Hanging on their sides were lanterns with three black sails on masts almost a hundred meters long.

And on its deck stood a mottled stone chair that was two to three meters high; its back facing the cabin. No one was sitting on it.

It was the Black Emperor-symbol of the King of the Five Seas, Nast!

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CHAPTER 971
RESTRAINT

On the observation deck of the liner, the bugle was sounded. It tore through the obstacles put up by the wind and rain, awakening all the passengers on board.

Unable to dress up in time, they could only don a coat or their pajamas, rushing barefoot to the window to observe the situation outside.

Half of the passengers quickly saw a gigantic sailboat that didn’t adhere to common sense. They saw its three pitch-black sails and the blob of pale flickering yellow amidst the dark environment.

Together with the howling winds, spattering rain, and the moonless and starless night sky, many passengers felt as though the ship was approaching them from hell, bringing with it an inexplicable sense of horror and dominance.

After a brief pause and frenzy, a name surfaced in their minds: Black Emperor!

Anyone who had been out at sea for some time, or people who lived in port cities in the various colonies, more or less knew the existence of such a pirate ship!

"Sigh, may the Storm be with you and me."

"May the Goddess watch over us!"

"Holy Lord of Storms!"

As the passengers subconsciously made prayers, they were filled with horror and helplessness.

These passengers knew very well that the owner of the Black Emperor had the highest bounty on the Five Seas. In a particular sense, he was the King of Pirates, and was a powerful figure who could remain alive despite the campaigns of the various fleets from different nations. He was definitely not someone the cannons and crew of a liner could resist.

This meant that they were about to fall into the hands of pirates!

Many women couldn’t help but imagine being raped by the pirates and being sold to unfamiliar lands. Some trembled while others collapsed to the ground. Some rummaged for daggers or revolvers; it was unknown if they wanted to resist, or if they were unwilling to face the worst outcome. Having failed to find weapons, some moved a clothes rack to their side.

The men didn’t react any better. Apart from a number of them drawing weapons in a bid to organize themselves to resist, the remaining froze in a daze or sought places to hide. Other cursed the darn liner and the King of the Five Seas.

Finally, the captain’s voice boomed into the ears of every passenger via the broadcasting equipment or something else.

"Silence! Don’t be afraid!

"The owner of the Black Emperor has his own code. He’s not like other pirates. His subordinates can only plunder for items and wealth, nothing else!

Such words were repeated a few times as the panicking passengers finally calmed down and no longer exhibited such horror.

Compared to the outcomes they had imagined, being able to live and not be raped was an excellent outcome.

Almost a minute late, a number of passengers were overwhelmed with sadness and cried upon realizing how their hard-earned savings would be wiped out.

Some of them were doing business through loans. If they were unable to pay their loans, it was possible that their family would end up on the streets, relying on the workhouses for survival.

Upon having this thought, they hurriedly took action and hid their wealth in all kinds of hidden compartments, hoping to keep as much as they could from the pirates. After doing this, they held their weapons tight, prepared to fight the pirates to the death at critical moments.

Even feral beasts would fight back when cornered, why not humans?

At this moment, many of the pirates on the Black Emperor were waiting by the broadside according to their orders. They were prepared to jump onto the prey once the distance was closed.

Their second mate, Horror Viscount Bird Mustang was holding a telescope as he observed the liner opposite him without much thought. He was inwardly calculating how much longer before the two ships met.

This pirate, whose bounty had exceeded ten thousand pounds, wore an Intis-styled shirt with complicated patterns on his sleeves and collars. He donned a dark red captain’s attire, as though he was awaiting the commencement of a ball, and not a pirate attack.

Suddenly, his vision blurred and he could no longer see the liner!

Bird Mustang hurriedly searched with his telescope, but regardless of the direction he aimed it at, there was nothing but stormy waves and red-headed sea eagles who enjoyed hunting fish during storms.

Such a huge liner had vanished!

The light in Bird Mustang’s eyes flickered as he failed to make an accurate judgment.

"Where’s the ship?"

"Where did such a huge ship go?"

"It was still around!"

The pirates on deck also noticed something amiss as they exclaimed.

A ghost ship? No, there aren’t any ghost ships with such a make. This is a steam and sail hybrid that got popular in recent decades… An illusion? Someone had hidden a liner with a large-scale illusion? An illusion at this scale has to have been done by a demigod… Bird Mustang’s thoughts raced as he retracted his telescope and headed for the cabin.

During this process, the distance he traveled seemed to distort. In about eight steps, Bird Mustang covered quite a sizable distance and arrived in front of the captain’s cabin. He reverently bowed and said, "Earl Nast, something abnormal has happened with the hunt."

On the Black Emperor, King of the Five Seas Nast continued having himself addressed as an earl, as it was a title conferred upon him by Emperor Roselle.

Of course, he had publicly announced that it was a matter of time before he established a pirates’ kingdom, becoming a duke, king, or even an emperor.

After a brief silence, a solemn voice sounded from the captain’s cabin:

"Circle around it."

"By your will!" Bird Mustang didn’t ask why as he directly accepted the order.

Of course, he could imagine the reason.

Be it an illusion or not, to make such a huge steam and sail hybrid liner vanish from the scrutiny of hundreds of pirates, it was definitely not something a Low- or Mid-Sequence Beyonder could accomplish. The ship definitely had a demigod or a powerhouse wielding a demigod-level Sealed Artifact!

And to clash with an unknown demigod for an ordinary liner was definitely an irrational act. Even if the Earl of White Maple Nast, as the King of the Five Seas, he wouldn’t do such rash acts unless there was something worth fighting for.

From this angle, the demigod was only hiding on the liner and had not launched any counterattack. This also implied that he didn’t wish to clash with the Black Emperor and the King of the Five Seas. Therefore, he had only exhibited his existence for shock and awe purposes.

Bird Mustang immediately got the sailors to leave the broadside and turn the Black Emperor around.

At this point, a huge and heavy red-headed sea eagle suddenly flew out of its flock and headed for the Black Emperor, spiraling above the ghost ship.

Amidst the pirates’ confusion, the red-headed sea eagle looked down upon the deck and spoke deeply in a human’s voice:

"I wish to meet the Earl of White Maple."

Bird Mustang was taken aback for a second before he cast his eyes at the cabin.

King of the Five Seas Nast’s solemn voice sounded again. Instead of directly answering the sea eagle, he instructed his subordinates, "Let him in."

Bird Mustang immediately followed the order as the sea eagle swooped down in the storm. Its body gradually changed and turned into a humanoid form.

When it landed on the deck, it was no longer a red-headed sea eagle, but a man with a tall top hat and tuxedo. His face wore a feathered mask.

Bird Mustang's eyes dilated slightly as though he was trying to take in the figure clearer.

But no matter how much he observed it, he was unable to discover anything abnormal about this exaggerated man. It was as though there wasn't a red-headed sea eagle from the very beginning.

A few seconds later, Bird Mustang's pupils dilated even more because he saw the figure's side profile when it walked past him.

This man, who appeared like he was an invitee at a banquet, was very thin. His side profile was about the width of two fingers!

At that instant, Bird Mustang felt as though he was seeing a walking paper figurine, but it was also slightly thicker than one!

A monster… He gulped with great difficulty as he watched the terrifying demigod walk towards the cabin.

The pirates on deck quickly retreated and leaned against the shipboard as though a nightmare had just walked past them.

To them, this abnormally proportioned man was something they had never seen before. It was more harrowing than the many monsters they had seen in the past.

At the third story of the cabin, outside the captain's cabin.

Klein held the handle, twisted it, and opened the door.

The reason he had made himself appear so strange was partially due to having no choice, but it was also partially deliberate. The former was because the red-headed sea eagle wasn’t big enough, so after creating the clothes and mask, there was no way to create a normal human’s body, even without the innards. The deliberate choice was because he was beginning to try out his theories on acting as a Bizarro Sorcerer. He had some ideas regarding this:

The term "Sorcerer" wasn’t key. What was key was to use the methods of a sorcerer to appear bizarre!

With a light creak, the dark black door opened, revealing the interior of the captain’s cabin.

Candle lamps drooped down from above, with 41 on the left and 40 on the right in an asymmetrical manner. At the end of it, a black platform rose up, surrounding an iron-black chair.

King of the Five Seas Nast’s figure was relatively normal. He was slightly taller than 1.9 meters, unlike the nonhuman form which resembled a giant that Klein had previously encountered.

He was still wearing a miniaturized crown with a black robe with silver ends. He had a squarish face with slight wrinkles. He had a short black mustache underneath his chin, and his black eyes swirled with a red glow. It made one bow their heads without realizing it.

"I’ve never met you before," Nast said in a deep voice, "Mr. Bizarro Sorcerer."

Klein took off his hat and bowed.

"You know me now."

Nast made his voice which made Spirit Bodies tremble resound inside the captain’s cabin.

"Speak. Why are you visiting me?"

"Emperor, I wish to know of your impression of Emperor Roselle. Everyone knows that you and your father have met ‘Him’ in the past far more than once," Klein replied without being affected.

Nast swept the paper figurine-like demigod as his dark red light brightened significantly.

"Have a seat first."

Before he finished his sentence, Klein felt a potent suppressive force on him. His body involuntarily sat on a chair beside him.

However, he was only here as a marionette. With a flick of the Spirit Body Threads, the figure that was thin as a book had quickly restored its balance.

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CHAPTER 972
NAST'S MEMORIES

With the pressure relieved, Klein casually pulled a chair over and placed it by the door, sitting opposite King of the Five Seas Nast with the entire hall separating them.

Although the Pirate King was more than 1.9 meters tall and was sitting on a black platform, allowing him to look down in a domineering manner, Klein didn’t play second fiddle in this encounter. He wore his tall top hat again.

After a brief silence, Nast, who had the official title of Earl of White Maple, said with a solemn tone, "Give me a reason why I should answer your question."

Klein’s thin body casually leaned back as he said, "You will not need to hear the same request when you have something you need to trade with me in the future."

The dark red light flickered in Nast’s black eyes as he said, "I basically know all the saints active in this world, but that doesn’t include you."

Klein caressed the feathered mask on his face and laughed. Without answering, he asked in return, "Have you met Zaratul?"

"I’ve met ‘Him’ twice in Emperor Roselle’s palace. I’d also interacted with quite a number of Secret Order members," Nast replied with a calm and direct but extremely domineering tone.

Quite a number of Secret Order members… You should introduce me to them when the opportunity arises… Klein couldn’t help but quip.

He then smiled and said, "I’ve also met Zaratul."

Nast raised his hand to stroke his short black beard. His already tall figure seemed to burgeon, making the mood in the captain’s cabin even gloomier and repressed.

After a few seconds, he stared at Klein from above and said, "My impression of Emperor Roselle is very simple:

"No one is more suitable than ‘Him’ to be the Black Emperor."

He didn’t explain what "Black Emperor" meant or pointed to, ignoring if the demigod opposite him understood or not.

Is that so… From this King of the Five Seas’s words, although the emperor’s diary implied that he made up his mind only in his later years to switch to the Black Emperor pathway and make preparations, he had long had such inclinations. He had unconsciously exhibited it and set up the situation ahead of time… Klein thought in enlightenment.

He believed that Nast’s impression of Emperor Roselle was limited to that. After all, they had only met a few times. Hence, he switched topics.

"In the emperor’s later years, did ‘He’ get you or your father to do something secret?"

Nast’s crown shook a little as he replied, "Someone had once asked me the same question."

Klein laughed and asked with a bold guess, "Bernadette?"

"Yes." Nast held the two sides of his black throne with his hands. "Back then, she was very young and immature to ask such a question. With Emperor Roselle’s level in his later years, compared to handing something secret to me and my father, what could be kept more secret than doing it ‘Himself?"

This is implying that I’m as immature as Bernadette back then… Klein sighed and said, "To people who are concerned about this, one wouldn’t abandon even the slightest sliver of hope."

This was also why he wished to meet the King of the Five Seas after concealing the liner.

He was now trying to find clues to the door of light above the gray fog in the real world. Apart from confirming who the third transmigrator was, he had to delve deep into Emperor Roselle’s matters. This was a necessary decision!

The dark red glow in Nast’s eyes contracted and expanded.

"What’s your relationship with Emperor Roselle?"

Klein thought and said with a sigh, "We can be considered old friends."

After all, they had been above that mysterious door of light, and the cocoons they were in were neighbors with only a thin obstacle in between them. They had been hanging there for centuries or even millennia.

This was a connection that stemmed from reality, and psychologically, having read so many of the emperor’s diaries, Klein had long treated the emperor as a fellow countryman. He shared the same feelings for home and sense of identity with him.

Nast stared at the thin demigod who sat by the door before he retracted his gaze and solemnly said, "Any more questions?"

Klein was already prepared. He asked in an unhurried tone, "Do you feel that there was anything abnormal about Emperor Roselle in his later years?"

The slightly wrinkled Nast remained silent for quite a while before saying, "I don’t know enough about ‘Him,’ so I wasn’t able to notice anything abnormal.

"The only thing that made me feel odd was that when me and my father met ‘Him,’ ‘He’ would stand at a floor-to-ceiling window facing west. He would stare into the distance. This would happen in the morning, noon, and the evening. And that room wasn’t the only one with a floor-to-ceiling window."

"West… Into the distance… the Fog Sea?" Klein seemed to mutter to himself as though seeking confirmation.

He recalled that the emperor’s diary had mentioned of a mysterious primitive island, and he recalled the Abyss that hid somewhere in the Fog Sea.

Nast nodded slightly and said, "That was my guess as well."

Phew… Klein silently exhaled. After some consideration, he stood up and said, "I’m done with my questions. Please pardon me for my intrusion. "Your Lordship, I wonder if I can help you in a transaction?"

He was fulfilling his promise.

Nast fell silent for two seconds and said, "Help me find the Card of Blasphemy that corresponds to the Black Emperor."

For an instant, Klein suspected that the Pirate King was testing him, but he immediately felt that an unknown demigod had little to do with the Black Emperor card. He said with a smile, "I’ll try my best.

"However, the questions from before aren’t worth a Card of Blasphemy. If I can obtain it, I’ll trade you for the information inside it. Of course, I might only provide clues to that card."

Nast caressed the armrest of his iron-black throne and said in a deadpan manner, "So be it."

Klein took off his hat again, bowed, and turned to leave before returning to the deck.

Under Horror Viscount Bird Mustang and company's gaze, he raised his arms.

His body rapidly contracted as the feather mask on his face spread out. In just two or three seconds, his entire person became an ordinary red-headed sea eagle.

This sea eagle immediately flapped its wings, flying into the dark storm, vanishing from the sights of the pirates of the Black Emperor.

That's a demigod… Bird Mustang looked into midair and sighed.

Although making a further advancement at Sequence 5 increased the inclination towards madness and a loss of control, making it highly possible for Beyonders to fail their advancement, the title of being a demigod remained attractive. As long as one successfully took the step, they could attain godhood, allowing their life to undergo a fundamental change. Be it in terms of lifespan or powers, it far exceeded that of humans, allowing them to reign above all.

On the liner, Klein abandoned his control over the red-headed sea eagle, allowing it to plunge into the sea to be fish food without anyone seeing it.

And at this moment, the passengers on board felt high-strung because the Black Emperor was about to approach.

In fact, this should've happened a few minutes ago, but for some reason, the Black Emperor had ignored the liner and headed forward. Yet, the liner didn't use this opportunity to escape, and it had instead circled around the Black Emperor, maintaining a few hundred meters from it.

This bizarre situation continued for a while before it finally ended, leaving dozens of meters between the two ships.

The Black Emperor passed the liner and steered into the stormy night without returning.

The passengers and crew watched blankly and realized the reality of the situation only a few minutes later.

The Black Emperor was gone! It hadn’t attempted to plunder them!

A number of passengers cheered while others had tears stream down their faces. A few collapsed to the ground and relaxed. Only a few maintained their lucidity, feeling puzzled as to everything that had happened. However, they were unable to find an answer that agreed with the situation at hand. All they could do was console themselves.

The Black Emperor must’ve completed a plunder already. Since this is a liner and not a cargo ship, it didn’t catch its eye!

As the euphoria spread across the ship, Kleindonning the appearance of Dwayne Dantès-cast his gaze to the north.

Compared to King of the Five Seas Nast, who had only met Roselle a few times, there was another person who knew the emperor even better: Queen Mystic Bernadette!

Being an equal peer to Nast, she had recently been in Backlund!

After I return to Backlund, I’ll get Admiral of Stars to contact Queen Mystic and try to meet her as soon as possible… Klein retracted his gaze, drew the curtains, and went to bed.

In the Rorsted Archipelago waters, on the Future.

Admiral of Stars Cattleya finally received a letter from Queen Mystic Bernadette.

She had no idea when the invisible messenger arrived, but this didn’t stop her from effusing her joy.

Tearing open the envelope and spreading open the letter, Cattleya eagerly read the first line below the salutation:

"That’s indeed Ciel’s descendant…”

That Artisan is really Emperor Roselle’s direct descendant… I can’t allow him to mix with the believers of the Primordial Moon. I have to bring him on board the Future… As Cattleya thought, she nodded indiscernibly.

After making up her mind, she thought of Artisan Cielf’s character and morals that only spelled trouble. She felt that she had the responsibility and duty to discipline him.

Amidst her deliberation, she walked to the window of the captain’s cabin and cast her gaze outside.

After some searching, her gaze fell onto the shipboard where Frank Lee was munching on mushrooms.

"Frank," Cattleya shouted out with her normal tone.

Frank, who had his sleeves rolled up, snapped out of his deep thought.

"Captain, is there something?"

Cattleya said seriously, "I’ll get you an assistant for your experiments."

Frank was taken aback before he revealed a pure smile.

"Alright!"

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CHAPTER 973
NEW "ANGEL"

Upon seeing Frank’s smile, Cattleya had mixed feelings. She then retracted her gaze and turned it to the nearby fishing village where the Future was docked.

No one expected this place to be an important base of the Moses Ascetic Order.

To avoid the pursuit of the Aurora Order, Cattleya and her crew had been docked here recently!

She wasn’t in a rush to set sail but was prepared to go ashore. She planned on using the equipment in the fishing village to make contact with her subordinates who were monitoring Artisan Cielf in Bayam. Through that, she could confirm the situation and make plans.

Only with this in place could the Future set sail again, headed for the capital of the Rorsted Archipelago, Bayam, that was several days away.

In Backlund, the sky brightened especially early in July, but the overall temperature wasn’t considered hot. It didn’t even exceed 30°C.

Emlyn wore a top hat to shelter him from the sunlight that penetrated the clouds as he disembarked a carriage and walked into the Harvest Church.

Looking over, he saw the mountainlike Father Utravsky who wore a brown priest robe and a clergyman’s bonnet. He was standing in front of the Sacred Emblem of Life, preaching to the few believers that came to pray in the morning.

Emlyn didn’t take a second look as he walked straight to the back of the cathedral. He arrived in a room that he called his, and he familiarly changed into his priest robes.

As he wiped the candle stands, he waited for the believers to leave. About twenty minutes later, he finally found an opportunity to sit beside Bishop Utravsky and muttered to himself while looking at the Sacred Emblem of Life, "Father, I have a question I would like to consult you about."

The thin-browed, light blue-eyed Bishop Utravsky with some clear wrinkles replied with a smile, "Go ahead."

Emlyn held his breath and verbalized the words he had been thinking over the entire night.

"If—and I’m saying, if there’s a distant relative who fools you, making you and your friend fall into danger and almost lose your life, and this matter isn’t suitable in court, how would you punish him?"

Despite sitting down, Utravsky remained like a hill. He said in a deep but gentle voice, "First, you have to confirm if the relative had made a mistake due to negligence, or if he had deliberately fooled you and lead you into a trap. If it’s the former, you need to warn him, remind him, and teach him, instead of thinking of punishing him. If it’s the latter, you still need to confirm if this is the way he usually does things.

"If it is, then you need to eliminate him. Otherwise, he will definitely bring more harm to others, bringing harm to innocents. By ending his life and sending him back to the land, it will restart the cycle of life. It’s a type of compassion and a type of purification…”

…Elimination… Father speaks of murder in a way that’s more natural, mellow, and calmer than The World! Emlyn’s facial muscles twitched as he hurriedly interrupted Utravsky’s reply.

"No, he usually doesn’t act this way. It’s just that due to various reasons, he had targeted me this once. I-I don’t wish to kill him because of this."

Just as he said that, Emlyn froze. He had apparently, probably, most likely, just expressed the fact that he was the victim, expressing that this matter was a Sanguine internal matter.

Utravsky turned to look at him and revealed a smile.

"Not bad. You already understand how precious life

is."

Emlyn forced a smile.

"Then, how should he be punished?"

Utravsky looked at the Sacred Emblem of Life in front of him.

"I do not advocate appealing to violence. You can bring him here and have him listen to my preaching and reading the bible. He will understand the value of life and experience the compassion of Earth Mother. He will serve to redeem his sins."

Isn’t this what I experienced… Emlyn was taken aback before realizing that this method was in line with his intentions.

This neither caused Ernes Boyar’s death, nor was it comparable to simply beating him up and demanding compensation. More importantly, this wouldn’t escalate to a conflict that would cause strife among the Sanguine!

Of course, every method had its flaws. To Emlyn, the biggest problem was:

How was he to bring Ernes Boyar to the Harvest Church?

From the moment he began doing volunteer work here, all the Sanguine in Backlund knew to avoid this region. Ernes Boyar was no exception. It was impossible to trick him into coming in!

And if he resorted to violence, Emlyn believed that, with the ring bestowed to him by Ancestor Lilith, as well as Miss Magician's powerful spellbook that could be rented, defeating Ernes Boyar wasn't a difficult endeavor. However, to control him wasn't simple. After all, he was a Sanguine Viscount, equivalent to that of a Sequence 5 Beyonder. In addition, although Ernes Boyar wasn't too old, he had quite a collection.

Under such circumstances, the extent of which to directly taking action was hard to gauge. It could easily lead to death, and Emlyn would be blamed for

Perhaps I need some help… In Backlund, there are many members of the Tarot Club. If we work together, we should be able to easily control Ernes… Uh, I can't expose my identity because of this. The cooperation should be done in stages, so that we don't have to meet… Amidst his thoughts, Emlyn had made his decision. He planned on assigning a mission during the Tarot Gathering next week in search for help.

He nodded gently in response to Father Utravsky's suggestion.

"It sounds pretty good.

"I plan on making a decision a few days later after calming down."

Father Utravsky nodded and smiled.

"Fruits are obtained from planting them. It's a long process that requires patience. From the looks of it, you have understood this point."

Of course, it's such a simple principle! Emlyn raised his chin slightly as he habitually clasped his hands and prayed to the Sacred Emblem of Life.

22 Phelps Street, Loen Charity Bursary Foundation.

Audrey placed a document in hand on the table and looked up at the wall clock in the director’s office. She could hardly relax.

She had already made an appointment with Escalante to head over to Stephen Hampres’s residence in the afternoon.

Clearly, this meant a test. If the Psychology Alchemists’s team was careful enough, they would’ve already reported the news, and there might be a councilor secretly observing everything.

Based on her current level and abilities, although Audrey was unable to determine how terrifying a High-Sequence Spectator was, she could imagine the kinds of performance they had in certain domains. This made her uncontrollably nervous, afraid that she would be "seen through."

In fact, I should’ve delayed it a little more. Although the time and the emotions I showed are in line with logic in psychology, delaying a meeting would definitely incur suspicion. But compared to a little bit of suspicion, it’s more important to wait for Mr. World to return from the Southern Continent. That way, I can directly arrange for them to meet at the foundation. I don’t have to worry about a High-Sequence Spectator discovering anything… Sigh, Audrey, your plans weren’t well-thought enough… Audrey sighed silently and cast Placate on herself to calm her emotions.

After the afternoon, she wasn’t in a rush to leave the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. Sitting inside her office, she bowed her head, clasped her hands together, and softly prayed to Mr. Fool.

After completing this, she got onto her carriage with Annie and Susie, heading for the residence of the furniture merchant, Stephen Hampres.

Just as the carriage began moving, Audrey suddenly saw a gorgeous beam of light appear.

Amidst the beam of light, a twelve-winged angel bathed with golden light descended. The wings which were made of flames had wrapped her in layers before they dissipated layer after layer.

Audrey’s vision quickly recovered as she swept her gaze past Annie and Susie through the corner of her eye in an unnoticeable manner. She realized that they hadn’t noticed anything that had happened.

It’s a little different from the previous angel… With Mr. Fool’s greater reawakening, "His" angels have also recovered further? As the corners of her lips quivered, Audrey wiped the smile from her face, her inner heart becoming abnormally firm.

In less than half an hour, her carriage had stopped by Stephen Hampres’s door.

After passing her hand to Annie, Audrey was helped down the carriage, and she walked straight to the door. She watched as her attendant pulled the doorbell.

Before long, Escalante came to open the door. Like before, she directly brought Audrey to the activity room on the first floor. Annie and Susie were brought to the living room by the servants.

Upon arriving at the activity room, Escalante reached out to hold the doorknob as she gestured for Audrey to enter.

This… Audrey had a guess, but she didn’t show it. She slowly walked through the door which Escalante had opened.

Escalante didn’t enter as she closed the activity room’s door.

Audrey looked ahead and saw that on a single-seater facing the activity room’s door, there was an elder sitting there quietly.

The elder wore a shirt, vest, and a jacket, matched with blue-gray trousers with lines adorning it, as well as a dark red bow tie. His hair was completely white but remained thick and lush. He had a warm and elegant bearing.

He had a pair of blue eyes that seemed to hide wisdom and knowledge. Apart from the wrinkles on his forehead, he didn’t have any wrinkles elsewhere.

Audrey knew him. He was the royal family’s consultant-Hvin Rambis!

Of course, Audrey had long known of this old gentleman’s secret identity from the Tarot Club: a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists!

She didn’t disguise her surprise, because she truly was surprised. Although she had guessed at the possibility of Hvin Rambis’s appearance, she never expected him to appear directly. She imagined that he would observe her in secret, allowing Hilbert and Stephen to speak on his behalf.

"You’re very surprised?" Hvin Rambis asked with a faint smile.

He then stood up and bowed.

"A pleasure meeting you, Miss Audrey."

Audrey deliberately opened her mouth before closing it again. Following that, she replied with a mixed smile, "I’m not sure how I should address you."

Hvin Rambis chuckled.

"Like always."

He pointed to the sofa beside them.

"Let’s have a seat."

Audrey took a deep breath, wore a smile, and unhurriedly walked over. Sitting by the sofa, she maintained an adequate distance from him.

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CHAPTER 974
MIND WORLD

Hvin Rambis picked up the porcelain teacup and took a sip. Looking at Audrey, who sat in a flawless posture, he said genially, "There’s no need to act so reserved. This isn’t our first meeting. I still recall discussing Birman’s philosophy of ethics and Kongsoka’s pragmatism with you two years ago."

Audrey smiled faintly and said, "I just find it difficult to put the idea of you and a Psychology Alchemists councilor together."

Hvin Rambis hadn’t introduced himself, but it was a reasonable inference based on Audrey’s knowledge of the Psychology Alchemists and the present situation.

Hvin crossed his right leg and said with a smile, "This isn’t something worth paying attention to. Never forget that our Psychology Alchemists is an organization established with the goal of studying the psyche and to build knowledge. We are more about the academic side of things rather than handling matters. Heh, since it’s academic, you can always treat a councilor as a university’s professor."

If she hadn’t learned from Mr. World that Hvin Rambis was behind Cuarón’s suicide, Audrey would’ve been able to conclude that he was a knowledgeable, amiable, humorous, and humble scholar, regardless of the amount of observation that she did. However, since she was wary, Audrey wasn’t someone who would so easily believe things that appeared on the surface.

As she looked at him and organized her words, she prevented herself from focusing too much on one point. She kept her thoughts lively and scattered

to prevent herself from being hypnotized.

At this moment, her mind suddenly turned adrift. She seemed to see the seven pure lights that contained infinite knowledge, and the dense, indescribable figures. She saw them blanketing everything from high above.

This was the spirituality sky, the reflection of the spirituality in one’s mind!

And beneath the spirituality sky was a deep, dark sea. Every drop of water resembled a point of light as though they represented an imprint on each subconscious.

Near this sea were several islands. One of them belonged to Audrey.

She clearly knew that this was a manifestation of her consciousness. What was exposed above the sea was what she could detect, and the parts covered by the "seawater" were her deeper consciousness that she was usually unable to grasp or know.

Floating above the island, Audrey looked to the bottom. She first noticed that the area was a solitary, quiet, gray blur. They screened out her vision, making her only capable of seeing the massive and dark black outlines of the subconscious, as well as the illusory and rippling sea of collective subconscious. She was unable to obtain much information from that.

Audrey was puzzled as to how she had entered this strange state when she saw large swaths of gray split apart like the sea deep in the sea of subconscious at the island below. It revealed a stone platform that had appeared at some point in time.

On the platform, a figure grew up rapidly in a fashion akin to blinking, entering Audrey’s field of view almost instantly.

His hair was completely white but remained thick and lush. He wore a standard three-piece suit, matched with blue-gray trousers with lines

adorning it, as well as a dark red bow tie. This man with deep wrinkles on his forehead was none other than Hvin Rambis.

Compared to the Hvin sitting on the sofa, he appeared more sinister. He didn’t wear a smile, and his head was slightly bowed. It was as though he was observing Audrey’s subconscious that lay behind.

In a few steps, he walked into Audrey’s island of consciousness through the sea of collective subconscious. Then, he went from the subconscious to the area exposed above the sea like a silent visitor who didn’t knock on the door or receive any permission.

After arriving on the island, Hvin Rambis raised his head. His facial skin was already covered in grayish-white scales. His irises were gold and vertical, and it didn’t show any hint of emotion.

This… Floating in midair, Audrey observed this scene and fully understood the situation she was in.

This was the world of the mind, a mind world formed by the spirituality sky, sea of collective subconscious, and the island of consciousness!

Due to the blessings from Mr. Fool’s angel, Hvin Rambis’s intrusion of my Body of Heart and Mind and psyche through the sea of collective subconscious sounded alarms… That force has separated my most fundamental part of my self-conscious, allowing me to control everything on the island from the spirituality sky. Thus, I’m able to truly resist true forms of telepathy… How magical — No, how despicable of Hvin Rambis! He’s not polite at all. He intruded into my "house" without gaining any permission or providing any notification! Audrey grumbled in midair.

After understanding her current situation, she secretly controlled the changes that were influencing the island while answering the casually seated Hvin Rambis in the real world.

"I’m also very reserved when facing university professors."

As she spoke, Audrey made her inner island "mumble."

This isn’t a good analogy. As a elderly Psychology Alchemists councilor, he should be a Sequence 4 at least. This is a demigod, one that naturally makes one feel fear, awe, and reserved!

On the sofa, Hvin Rambis chuckled immediately.

"Then I won’t be forcing you. I’ve heard about you from Hilbert. I heard that you’ve advanced from Psychiatrist to Hypnotist in a short few months. I’m very curious about how you did it? Oh, I’ve also heard of the answer you gave Escalante-having the courage to make use of matters. However, I wish to hear something more detailed."

At this moment, the Hvin Rambis on Audrey’s mind island was observing his surroundings with a deadpan expression, listening the resonating voice. Audrey was already prepared for this as she deliberately pretended to be organizing her words. After a few seconds, she said, "It’s just the superficial meaning of ‘having courage to make use of matter.’"

"Uh… Let’s put it this way. In my future plans, I’ve always had one of my options being a Psychiatrist. Since I’ve acquired the corresponding Beyonder powers, I-I was definitely very happy to try it out and help the people around me resolve their mental and psychological problems."

While saying that, she showed some signs of embarrassment towards such actions that bordered on childishness. Her mind island faithfully reflected

this.

After a pause, Audrey continued, "During this process, I discovered that my control over the potion’s powers became better until, one day, I felt something in me shatter and fuse into my blood. It also allowed me to vaguely see illusory stars. Mr. Rambis, what does it represent?

"Uh, for some reason, I firmly decided to become a Hypnotist from that day. This might also be a cue from my subconscious."

After saying that, Audrey deliberately stuck out her tongue on her mind island like when she was little, doing things she usually wouldn’t do. It was a way to prove that she was feeling a little embarrassed because playing psychiatrist was no different from playing princess when she was little.

And embarrassment often meant the truth.

Hvin Rambis nodded gently and said, "Very talented. You seem to have figured out the ‘acting method’ by yourself."

"Acting method?" Audrey wore a surprised and blank look both inside and outside before coming to a realization.

Hvin Rambis said with a genial smile, "It’s exactly as you think it is. By acting based on the potion’s name, and concluding the corresponding principles, that will speed up the digestion of the potion. It is an effective method for reducing the negative influences."

"However, before Sequence 6, we do not teach it because we do not advocate members using this method to accelerate the digestion of their potions. Surprisingly, you have figured it out yourself."

"Why don’t you advocate it?" Audrey asked sincerely out of curiosity.

Hvin Rambis sighed and said, "This will make the members not be themselves. Some might even be assimilated by the remnants of the potion.

"To put it simply, the first three Sequences are for one to slowly grasp their powers and get used to being extraordinary. It allows one’s subconscious to be deeper, become clearer, and turn more mature. It aids in resisting the subsequent problems that come from the ‘acting method.’

"Of course, I can only give my opinion on the Spectator pathway. As for the other Beyonder pathways, I’m not too sure if they’re the same. But clearly, pathways that focus on the domain of the mind would have some differences in the area of self-consciousness."

Audrey was unable to determine the veracity of Hvin Rambis’s words. She felt that there was definitely some reason to it, but it was not entirely the truth.

Little Sun mentioned before that one key thing to remember regarding the "acting method" is "remember that you’re only acting”…I find this more appropriate. Yes, I’ve been strictly abiding to it, and will keep doing so in the future… Audrey, you mustn’t be careless. From this moment forth, you must put more emphasis on your self-consciousness! From Mr. Fool’s point of view, this must be trivial and doesn’t require additional emphasis since it’s included in the statement of "only acting." But to the ordinary person, perhaps it’s relatively more important… As Audrey’s thoughts raced, she asked, "Can you explain the ‘acting method’ in more detail?"

Hvin Rambis explained it to her in a relatively more detailed manner before saying, "You are indeed talented and qualified to obtain the Sequence 5 Dreamwalker potion formula, but before that, I’ll give you several missions. This is out of fairness and also a form of training for you. This is because once you achieve Sequence 5, you will be leading two to three psychological discussion groups. Your every judgment and choice will influence the future and even the lives of the members beneath you. Therefore, we mustn’t allow people who deeply lack experience in handling matters to advance to Sequence 5."

"Understandable." Audrey didn’t object to it. "What’s the first mission?"

Hvin Rambis said with a smile, "A simple but rather long-term mission. Every piece of feedback you provide will count towards your contributions."

At this point, he sighed.

"The fracture between the New Party and the Conservative Party is widening. The more conflict there is, the more divided the kingdom’s internal politics will be. I wish that you can take note of the attitude of your father, Earl Hall. Inform me of some of his views towards various bills and matters. Don’t worry, this will not cause him any harm. We only wish to mend the fractures."

His final statement was, in fact, not supported by logic. It was solely a promise. But with Hvin Rambis raising his right hand to his temples while on Audrey’s "mind island," Audrey felt that what he said was very reasonable and deeply relatable.

Floating above her mind world, she immediately snapped to her senses and realized something was amiss.

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CHAPTER 975
A FAMILIAR FEELING

How can you not cause harm to my father from knowing his trump cards? This will bring about negative impacts to matters that he's trying to push for or object to… Floating in the mind world, Audrey looked down at her island of consciousness, her thoughts were so calm that it surprised her.

Right on the heels of that, she suddenly realized why Hvin Rambis had directed Cuarón's suicide.

Audrey had always been concerned about this matter. Furthermore, she had obtained information from various sources, giving her a rather clear idea of the overall picture. However, she had ultimately been stumped about the mastermind's goal.

This trap seemed to be targeted at the purse strings of the Conservative Party, Baron Syndras. As long as he failed to respond properly, this powerful banker would have his problems exposed and end up handled by the official Beyonder organizations. However, the actual process seemed to lack the panache of a High-Sequence Beyonder of the Spectator pathway. It was especially so when Dwayne Dantès reacted unexpectedly, causing the plan to immediately be foiled; yet, there wasn't any mending of the plan.

As a rather senior Spectator, Audrey had long noticed the incongruity within this matter. However, it was only after hearing Hvin Rambis's words today that she realized the core of the matter.

Hvin Rambis didn't care if he had successfully taken down Baron Syndras, as he had already accomplished his goals.

It was just as he had said, the New Party and Conservative Party were fractured!

Although Hvin Rambis claimed to be trying to mend it, his true goal was to deepen the cracks and cause them to completely fall out with each other!

Why is he doing this? Audrey controlled her mind island and didn't make it show any puzzled emotions.

She then replied to Hvin Rambis, "I can understand your concern for the kingdom's political situation. I will work hard on this."

Just as she said that, the gloomy Hvin Rambis on the mind island lowered his right hand from his forehead. Hvin Rambis, who was sitting on a sofa in the real world, said with a gladdened smile, "You are indeed a young noble lady filled with compassion."

With that said, the old gentleman lowered his right leg which was covered by grayish-blue trousers with lined patterns. He leaned forward slightly as his eyes grew darker.

"Due to your identity and daily environment, you shall forget about me. You will only remember Hilbert, Stephen, and Escalante. You will pass any information through them…

"When there are extremely pressing issues that need reporting, you will subconsciously visit me with the excuse of consulting me on some academic question… When you enter my room, your lost memories will recover…"

As Hvin Rambis said those words, the him on Audrey's mind island opened his mouth and repeated the words. A "rock" took form and quickly plunged into the ground, sinking into the subconscious.

At that moment, Audrey felt as though she had dissociated into two entities.

One was a result of a mind island-she could no longer remember the appearance or name of the elder in front of her. She only knew that she had come to Stephen Hampres’s residence and met a Psychology Alchemists councilor where she received the approbation of the "acting method" and received a new mission.

Another her floated beneath the spirituality sky, acutely aware of everything that had happened. However, there wasn’t much emotional changes. It was more optimistic than gloomy.

Audrey was certain that the one in midair was her true self-conscious. Therefore, she didn’t feel confounded. With "her" as the true self, she controlled her other self and got up in a muddle.

"Yes, Sir."

After answering him, she rapidly straightened her body, and like a puppet who was being controlled by invisible strings, she walked to the door and left.

At the instant she closed the door, the her in the mind world’s sky and the her corresponding to the island of consciousness fused as one. There were no longer any differences.

The two entities with certain memory discrepancies instantly fused together, giving Audrey a few seconds of confusion. However, with plenty of experience in treating people and hypnotizing others, she very quickly and skillfully identified the differences. She then reconstructed every detail from before.

What powerful mind-reading and hypnosis… He directly entered my Body of Heart and Mind and even my Soul Body to exert influence via the sea of collective subconscious… Although Audrey had the blessings of The Fool’s angel, she felt that her recollections were like viewing old photographs. They were yellowed and faded, as though they were matters that happened years ago.

I’ll be able to do the same in the future! The blessings of Mr. Fool’s angel is really impressive! Humph, I’ll only inform you of Father’s take on unimportant matters! As Audrey’s mind whirled, her mood turned for the better.

Whoosh!

The steam locomotive that spewed out copious amounts of smoke dragged its carriages as it chugged into Backlund.

After traveling for days, Klein had finally returned to this Capital of Capitals.

As Dwayne Dantès, Klein wore a top hat and a formal suit while holding a gold inlaid cane. He slowly left the first-class cabin and firmly stood on the platform.

Behind him was a man with mixed-blood. He was about 1.75 meters tall, and he carried two luggage bags. He was none other than the marionette, Enzo. Of course, this Winner had already changed his name to Enuni, which sounded more in line with the Southern Continent’s traditions. In the future, he would be the go-to person to establish contact with the Southern Continent’s clientèle for the upstart tycoon and arms dealer, Dwayne Dantès. The non-crucial business would be handled by him, without needing Dwayne Dantès to personally head to East and West Balam.

Of course, this was simply a disguise. In fact, Klein would be the one making the trip.

He had decided to send believers to West Balam in the name of Sea God Kalvetua and get them to represent himself to complete some small-scale deals. After all, Danitz was an infamous pirate over the Five Seas, with a bounty exceeding ten thousand pounds. Furthermore, he had close ties with Gehrman Sparrow, and it easily incurred suspicion if he kept helping Dwayne Dantès.

After leaving the station, Klein rode a carriage and returned to 160 Böklund Street.

It was already dark by then. The street lamps on both sides of the street had already lit up, likewise for Dwayne Dantès's residence. Butler Walter and Housekeeper Taneja led the male and female servants, as well as the gardener and coachmen, out. They stood on both sides to welcome their employer back.

After he arrived in Desi Bay and bought the train tickets, Klein had sent a telegram back to Backlund, informing his butler when he was returning. However, he had instructed him not to send the coachman to pick him up at the station. After all, this was an era when steam locomotives were often delayed. It wasn't impossible that its arrival would be delayed to the next morning.

Glancing at his servants who stood with a standard, reverent pose, Klein secretly nodded and passed through them as he sighed inwardly.

This does resemble the style of nobility. Even when the employer isn't around, the butler doesn't skive… When he arrived at the door, he nodded gently at Walter and Taneja before saying, "It must've been hard on you while I was away."

"It's our duty," Walter and Taneja said with a bow.

Klein then turned his gaze to his valet, Richardson. He realized that this good-looking mixed-blood had a somewhat pale expression as he kept stealing glances at his employer's new valet, Enuni.

Klein smirked inwardly as he nodded at him.

"You did well. However, there's some business involving the Southern Continent that requires Enuni to handle it.

"Oh yes, be Mr. Walter’s assistant and help him in gathering information for a manor outside the city."

Assistant… Assistant butler… Richardson was first taken aback before he replied in pleasant surprise, "Yes, Sir!"

With this role, it meant that he had broken free from the constraints of being a valet. He had been promoted!

Walter didn’t ask about the manor in detail as he seriously arranged for his employer’s settling in, bath, and meals.

After all of this was done, he and Enuni sent Dwayne Dantès back to the third story before he asked, "Sir, do you plan on buying a manor in the suburbs of Backlund? What requirements do you have?"

Something not too expensive… Who knows how long I can use this identity for… Klein inwardly gave a self-deprecating comment before deliberating.

"One with a vineyard and brewery."

After completing the arms deal, he had already established himself in Backlund’s high society and had earned a huge sum of money. Therefore, it was necessary for him to own a manor. He couldn’t afford to not be capable of inviting his friends on a vacation and hunt in the suburbs when autumn and winter came. This was a faux pas that could easily make him be viewed with scorn.

Furthermore, the manors in Backlund’s suburbs were rather expensive. One could purchase a huge manor with rubber trees in places like Desi Bay for eight to ten thousand pounds, but here, all he wanted was a vineyard and grain farm, with facilities like a brewery.

"I will gather the information as soon as possible," Walter replied respectfully.

He knew his employer was exhausted from his traveling, so after briefly informing him of the recent developments, he left the third story and busied himself on other matters. With the new valet's help, Klein changed his clothes and washed up.

During this process, Klein, who had gotten accustomed to his godhood, couldn't help but lampoon.

If it wasn't because a marionette cannot be more than a thousand meters from me, would I have changed valets… Despite being a tycoon, I still have to serve myself… Sigh!

Amidst his sighs, he dismissed Winner Enuni to the adjoining room and walked to the window. He looked at the lamp-lit Backlund, which resembled stars, as he allowed his thoughts to wander.

Next, my goal is MI9's deputy director, Brigadier General Qonas Kilgor…

As for the captain of the royal guards, Viscount Stratford, I can leave him to the Demoness, Trissy… She has vanished for quite some time. I wonder what he has been busy with. I wonder if she has come up with a way to approach that viscount… I had previously informed her that I have other matters to tend to and wasn't free via the method she gave me. I'll later have to confirm that I'm free now and can continue our previous cooperation effort…

After a while, Klein reined in his thoughts and got into bed. Without the help of Cogitation, he fell deep asleep.

After an unknown period of time, he suddenly opened his eyes and sensed that someone had entered 160 Böklund Street!

Here it comes again… Klein couldn't help but raise his hand to rub his temples.

On the first day of returning to Backlund, he had been awakened in the middle of the night.

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CHAPTER 976
ZEALOT

Dressed in pajamas, Klein didn’t move. In his spiritual perception, the intruder’s Spirit Body Threads appeared.

This also meant that if he so wished, he could turn everyone in 160 Böklund Street into his marionette without leaving the bed. Of course, to a demigod-a Bizarro Sorcerer—the neighbors a few buildings away were within range.

There are many Spirit Bodies around. One of them is helping him fly. He has landed on the opposite balcony… Is it a Beyonder from the Death pathway, or the Evernight pathway? To be able to do this, he must at least be a Sequence 6… He’s here for Richardson? No, he’s walking towards my bedroom. He has paused and has reached out his right hand to knock gently on my door… He’s certain that I’ve detected him? Klein sat up with a slightly heavy expression.

He had made the initial judgment via the Spirit Body Threads, but subsequently, he did it via direct "sight"-a scene that formed in his mind.

After Klein reached Sequence 4, not only was his danger premonition as a Clown enhanced, the amount of power he could stir and use from the mysterious space above the gray fog had experienced a qualitative boost. With the two combined, it wasn’t difficult for him to use his intuition to have a projection of the intruder’s figure and actions, despite the distance.

In addition, due to his deepened control over the mysterious space, Klein could converge the augmentation effects the gray fog had on him in the real world. This prevented Beyonders of certain pathways from seeing anything. Based on his judgment, by being above the gray fog, augmenting himself

with a Card of Blasphemy, and using the Sea God Scepter, the strength that The Fool could direct at the real world was asymptotically closer to that of an angel.

If that weren't the case, even if the gray fog and the Paper Figurine Substitutes could allow others to maintain their lucidity in dreamlike states, Klein wouldn't have dared to allow Miss Justice to face a Sequence 4 or even Sequence 3 of the Spectator pathway.

Amidst his thoughts, he left his bed, wore his slippers, and straightened his pajamas. He walked to the reclining chair and leisurely sat down.

"Please come in."

The door to the master bedroom opened silently, but no cold wind blew in. All it did was spiral in the corridor.

The visitor was a man about Dwayne Dantès's age, and of similar height. He had black hair and brown eyes. He had cut facial features, a classic example of a Loenese man.

He wore a silk top hat and had a rather thin face. His demeanor was cold but wasn't one that left others feeling uncomfortable. Instead, it was a manifestation of the night view at a suburban cemetery.

At this instant, Klein saw countless Spirit Bodies hugging a middle-aged gentleman. It made his surroundings dark and stacked, as though a world was hidden within.

Klein's spiritual intuition told him that this was a demigod.

Why would there be a demigod coming to me moments after I arrive back in Backlund… Apart from the Church of Evernight's Backlund archbishop, nothing has been exposed in regards to this identity as Dwayne Dantès… Having a headache, Klein looked at the door without an expression. It was unknown whether he was feeling angry or alarmed.

After taking two steps, the demigod’s right hand suddenly hung down straight. Together with his waist, it bent like a bow pulled to its limit.

He had bowed deeply in a strange manner, his attitude extremely reverent. Meanwhile, a cold wind blew over, closing the door silently.

Klein was nearly taken aback, feeling at a loss. His mind whirred as he came to a rough guess.

At this moment, the demigod maintained his pose and said in a deep voice, "In response to a revelation, I, Patrick Bryan of the Numinous Episcopate, am here to meet Your Excellency."

Revelation… Klein controlled the twitching of his facial muscles. Together with his previous guess, he had a rough understanding of what was happening.

The Evernight Goddess had deepened "Her" control of Artificial Death-in other words, the Death pathway’s Uniqueness! "She" was able to give revelations to the high-ranking members of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction!

Klein sighed as he chuckled. He pressed his right hand to his chest, but he didn’t make any additional movements.

"What is God’s revelation?"

Bryan slowly stood straight and looked at the gentleman with the white sideburns sitting at the reclining chair. He replied with some level of fervor, "We succeeded. God has finally awakened. ‘He’ has requested me to listen to your commands from this day forth, and to follow your arrangements."

Klein had already expected this, but he felt his face burn, unsure whether to laugh or cry.

This is making me be a Blessed of Evernight while also part-timing as a Blessed of Artificial Death, so as to silently lead the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction… Is this a bestowment of fate, or a price that had been exacted? Since the Goddess didn’t get the Church’s archbishops or high-ranking deacons to handle this matter, it means that "She" wishes it to be kept confidential… Klein instantly stood up and tried to appear pious in tone and expression.

"As God’s revelation commands.

"God’s wish is my wish!"

After expressing his devotion, he looked at the demigod standing straight in front of him and pointed to the sofa opposite him.

"Please have a seat. Oh, do introduce yourself. That’s the most basic form of politeness, isn’t it?"

Moments ago, as the thoughts ran through his mind, Klein had vaguely grasped the reason why the Goddess had handed him leadership over the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction.

As Gehrman Sparrow, he had close connections with the Death Consul!

Therefore, if anyone were to really discover anything amiss and begin investigating the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction, they would realize that it had something to do with Gehrman Sparrow and be enlightened. They would believe that they had grasped the truth as to why Artificial Death was able to come to life and send a revelation.

Due to this guess, Klein deliberately made Dantès use Gehrman Sparrow’s usual speech.

Patrick Bryan sat on the sofa and said after some thought, "I’m Loenese. I once did business in East Balam and nearly died because of a disease. I was

rescued by members of the Numinous Episcopate, and during that ritual, I received God’s grace and survived. Later, I secretly changed my faith.

"The faction I’m in is always being vilified by the other members of the Numinous Episcopate. They believe that we’re engaging in sacrilege, that we’re in a bid to create a new Death. But that’s not the case. We firmly believe that God didn’t perish at the end of the Fourth Epoch. ‘He’ is merely asleep and requires certain things to be done in order to awaken. The facts have proven that we were right. You are witness to this."

The ancient chronicles I received didn’t say so. Those high-ranking members of the Numinous Episcopate are fully aware that they are emulating the matter of the Hidden Sage to create Artificial Death… Could it be that this gentleman in front of me isn’t a core member of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction? And he also lacks sufficient knowledge regarding the Uniqueness? But how can a demigod not be a core member? Even if the Numinous Episcopate is a remnant of the Balam royal family and Death’s Church, with copious amounts of knowledge and powerhouses, there’s no way they will let a demigod go to waste… Even the seven orthodox Churches wouldn’t do such a thing… Klein was extremely puzzled hearing this as he asked, "What about the other high-ranking members of your faction?" Patrick Bryan said with a reverent look, "When I joined the Numinous Episcopate, God had already awakened a little. This is all the work of the saints of the past. They had sacrificed themselves over the numerous rituals.

"Currently, we have a total of three saints and an angel. They are in East Balam while I’m in charge of Backlund matters."

That’s not right. Based on the information provided by Leonard, the Numinous Episcopate have their members split into many small teams in Backlund. They aren’t aware of each other, and they only make contact with a specific person in the Southern Continent. There’s no overall person-in-charge… Klein’s first reaction was that Patrick Bryan was lying, but he immediately dismissed it. This was because it was something easily verifiable for a Blessed who had been the focus of a revelation.

He thought for a moment before he asked, "What’s that angel’s name? Where is ‘He’? Are there any other revelations?"

Patrick Bryan answered frankly, "God made me not inform others, nor make inquiries to others about matters.

"Our leader’s name is Haiter, both a last name and first name. ‘He’ was once the archbishop of the Church, and later he became an angel thanks to God’s grace. ‘He’ has always been working hard to awaken the sleeping God, but he was severely corrupted in one of the rituals. Currently, ‘He’ is unable to leave his mausoleum; otherwise, he would directly lose control. ‘He’ is considered my teacher."

This demigod that has existed since the Balam Empire is clearly key in steering the Artificial Death project… Klein asked in thought, "He’ and the other two demigods are Balamese pure-bloods?"

"Yes." Patrick Bryan nodded.

I roughly get what’s happening… Klein couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

He believed that Patrick Bryan wasn’t an ordinary demigod, but a byproduct of the Artificial Death

project!

Back then, Haiter and the other members of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction had no intention of saving a Loenese. Instead, they had planned on using him for a ritual’s sacrificial item or material. In the end, something unexpected happened during their attempt which they originally hadn’t had high hopes of. Death’s Uniqueness gained some level of instinct or produced other changes. This led to Patrick Bryan’s survival and his establishment of a certain connection with Artificial Death. His spirit and body became special.

Upon witnessing this, Haiter and the other high-ranking members began viewing Patrick Bryan as key to the success of the Artificial Death project. They gave him potions and taught him, proselytizing him with the faith of Death; thus, fabricating a perfect excuse for themselves. And due to Bryan’s specialness, he had advanced rapidly and became a demigod.

Of course, no matter how key he was, he was merely an experimental subject. Patrick Bryan had never been treated as one of the members of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction. Later, he was sent to the Loen Kingdom’s Backlund to lead two or three teams. He did various kinds of rituals in a bid to bring the Uniqueness alive.

Such a guess was in line with the situation which Klein was currently aware of. First, Leonard had mentioned that the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction had placed their experiments in Backlund, planning to destroy the enemy’s capital even if an accident happened. Second, many teams were independently connected to the Southern Continent and Backlund and had no overall person-in-charge. Third, Patrick Bryan’s knowledge of Artificial Death was very different from reality.

This also meant that the people in the Southern Continent didn’t care for Bryan’s life and death, nor did they tell him the truth. Under such circumstances, there was no other explanation unless he was a byproduct of the Artificial Death project.

Hmm, from the looks of it, the Goddess’s control of the Uniqueness is still limited. "She" can only send revelations to one person who is directly connected to Artificial Death. "She" is unable to influence Haiter and the other saints… Klein reined in his thoughts and asked, "What’s your current Sequence?"

Patrick Bryan didn’t hide the truth.

"I’m an Undying."

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CHAPTER 977
FIRST SERMON

Klein wasn’t surprised at Patrick Bryan’s answer. He nodded gently and said, "Which incarnation number are you at?"

Based on what he knew, Undying died once every sixty years before reviving. They would then lose most of their memories, which needed to be slowly recollected. It was like the beginning of a new life.

This was knowledge that came from the potion, so Patrick Bryan easily understood what the Blessed meant. He deliberated over his words and said, "I’m not 50 yet. I haven’t been an Undying for more than 10 years."

Klein then asked, "When did you switch faiths to our Lord?"

Here, "Lord" referred to the Lord of the Underworld.

Bryan recalled for two to three seconds before he said, "I had just celebrated my 30th birthday back then."

Stepping into the world of mystery at 30 and becoming a Beyonder. Becoming a Sequence 4 demigod before 40… This speed either means shocking talent or that he’s a Blessed… Heh, indeed, his spirit and body had been influenced by the Death pathway’s Uniqueness during that ritual… As Klein listened, he became more certain of his theories from before.

Of course, compared to how he had only taken a year to go from an ordinary person to a Sequence 4 demigod, Patrick Bryan’s advancement speed was nothing

On this point, Klein didn’t feel that there was anything to be poignant about, because he was truly a "Blessed." Furthermore, he had cheats-far greater than one.

The only problem was that he wasn’t sure if everything that he had done was enough to exchange for something

After some thought, Klein asked, "What’s your current public identity?"

"I’m a businessman. I have two garment factories in Backlund. On the surface, I believe in the Evernight Goddess and am a supporter of the New Party…” Patrick Bryan introduced himself.

Klein nearly let out a scoff as he continued, "How many Numinous Episcopate members do you have under you? What are they doing?"

Already prepared, Bryan answered eloquently, "Two teams, a total of twelve Beyonders. Some of them are working at my garment factory while others are in the watch and clock industry. All of them have their own formal occupations.

"Typically, they will be careful when proselytizing to the people around them. The progress on this is very slow, nor is it the main goal. We do not have more than a hundred believers.

"Most of the time, they are searching for clues that God had left behind, as well as the different materials needed for the awakening ritual.

"With clues in hand, we will carry out operations. And once the materials are gathered, we will experiment in different awakening rituals and seek out the most effective one. I’m the main person behind this operation, and am also core to the rituals."

You sound pretty proud of that… Klein asked about other matters and received detailed answers.

Finally, he thought for a moment before saying with a stern expression, "In accordance with the revelation from God, you are to heed my instructions from this moment forth."

Patrick Bryan immediately got up and gave a solemn bow.

"Yes, Your Excellency."

Klein nodded slightly and answered, "First, stop all rituals and stop gathering materials. God has already partially awakened. ‘He’ is in ‘His’ recovery stage, so ‘He’ isn’t to be disturbed by ‘noise.""

From Klein’s point of view, regardless of the changes in Bryan’s awakening rituals, they were ultimately pointed at Artificial Death-the Death pathway’s Uniqueness. This would only increase its chances of coming to life, making it disadvantageous for the Goddess to deepen her control over it.

And regardless if Klein was happy for this to happen or not, since the Evernight Goddess had assigned Bryan to him, he had to make such arrangements.

Patrick Bryan had zero doubts toward his explanation, because Death had indeed awoken, and "awakening rituals" were, in essence, a form of "disturbance."

This Undying thought before asking, "Your Excellency, what should we do next?"

Klein smiled with approbation.

"Continue seeking out clues for things that God left behind. This will aid in ‘His’ recovery."

Upon saying that, Klein originally had a second request, but he was worried that there were too few clues to it, making it possible for the Numinous Episcopate members to stir up trouble with nothing to be done. He added,

"In addition, promote reading to all those around you and your subordinates, be it at the garment factory or elsewhere. Establish night schools or learning classes. Let the people around you extricate themselves from ignorance and savagery."

To make it more convincing, Klein stretched out his right hand and pressed it to his chest. With abnormal piousness, he began preaching, "God said one needs to understand the belief to believe.

"God said that to those who are lost, one has to first strengthen their body and arm his brain. This is because the kingdom ‘He’ promises is one without ignorance and savagery."

Patrick Bryan didn’t doubt Dwayne Dantès’s words, nor did he find it strange that such records weren’t found in the Numinous Episcopate’s bible. This was because this person before him was God’s Blessed, a representative appointed by God!

He earnestly nodded.

"I will heed God’s teachings.

"May every spirit gain eternal life in God’s kingdom!"

As he said that, he used the praying gesture that the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction used. It was to raise both hands high, thumbs facing each other as he held them at his forehead.

In mysticism theory, this was the core to the Underworld contained in every Gatekeeper. It represented Death’s position.

Klein returned with the same gesture and words before saying, "Second, orders from the Southern Continent-no matter who it comes from—has to be handed to me first. They can be done only after I give permission. If no permission is given, you are not to do it in private. You can only give feedback based on what I say."

This was because he was worried that Haiter, the angel of the Death domain, would still remain fervent about the Artificial Death plan, occasionally instructing Bryan and the others to make new attempts.

Meanwhile, he also had to ensure that Haiter and the other two saints wouldn’t notice anything amiss before the Goddess gained a deeper control over the Death pathway’s Uniqueness. He needed to prevent them from doing anything excessive.

Bryan had no objections on this matter.

"Yes, Your Excellency!"

After giving instructions on the two most important matters, Klein wore the same expression, but he inwardly felt relieved. He said after some deliberation, "Third, unless convened by me, do not seek me out. Our usual communications shall be completed via messengers.

"As you know, there are many existences in the astral world who do not wish to see God return."

Patrick Bryan nodded heavily.

"I understand.

"My messenger’s summoning incantation is ‘Spirit wandering above the world, absolutely friendly creature, Patrick Bryan’s Contract Companion." Indeed, it’s impossible for a demigod of the Death pathway to not have a messenger… Normally, Sequence 6 Beyonders of this pathway should have one… Klein didn’t hesitate as he answered in an unhurried tone, "Remember, my messenger’s summoning incantation is ‘The spirit that wanders about the unfounded, the friendly creature that can be subordinated, the messenger that belongs to Gehrman Sparrow.’ Oh, be it receiving or sending mail, a gold coin needs to be paid to complete the transaction."

Klein deliberately revealed that Gehrman Sparrow and Dwayne Dantès were related, in order to determine Bryan’s reaction.

"Gehrman Sparrow…” Patrick Bryan repeated the name in puzzlement before coming to an enlightened state. He exclaimed in pleasant surprise, "Your Excellency, Death Consul?"

Thankfully, although he’s a byproduct of a ritual and is fervently zealous, he has normal intelligence. He can consciously seek out information and do an analysis… Klein exhaled in relief and replied with a smile, "I’m not him. ‘He’ is my teacher."

Bryan nodded in thought, believing that he had fully understood the entire matter.

Klein guessed at his thoughts but ignored it. Crossing his right leg, he placed both hands on his knee and asked, "What do you know about the other factions of the Numinous Episcopate?"

Patrick Bryan sat down again and said, "The Numinous Episcopate’s strongest faction is the royal family faction. With God’s descendants as the core, they have established many organizations…

"Their leader is currently a descendant with a relatively thin bloodline. Her name is Sia Palenque Eggers. She might be an angel or wields an important relic of God. She calls herself Pale-White Empress…

"Other than her, the royal family faction had five other saint apostles. Some of them are true demigods, while others rely on Sealed Artifacts…

"Other than the royal family faction and us, the other factions are relatively weaker. The main ones are the Repose faction and the Underworld faction… Only by working together do they have three powerful Beyonders who are equivalent to the saint apostles…”

After Bryan finished, Klein nodded indiscernibly.

"That’s it for today. If there’s anything in the future, feel free to contact me."

"Yes, Your Excellency." Patrick Bryan stood up and bowed before leaving the room. The door silently opened as the "figure" outside slinked into the shadows and disappeared with the cold wind.

After everything calmed down, Klein glanced at the door that had closed. He walked to the window, drew the curtains, and looked towards the street.

There were a few carriages there at some point in time. Each of them had two lanterns hanging in front of them. Their lights were abnormally pale-white with a tinge of dark green. They illuminated the surroundings into a blur.

Nearly transparent figures surrounded this blurry scene. They were wearing illusory clothes that appeared like formal wear, making them appear rather formal.

After Patrick Bryan landed from midair and returned, the figures bowed and attentively followed the demigod and the spirit beside him onto the hardly-visible carriages. Then, they steered into the distance.

The pale-white light with tinges of dark green grew faint and finally vanished into the darkness as though it had never arrived.

Klein looked away and muttered to himself with a solemn expression, Although the revelation received by Patrick Bryan stems from the Goddess and "Her" considerations, I have a nagging feeling that there’s something dark and sinister about to break out in Backlund or even the entire world.

I wonder when it will stir up some waves…

With this in mind, Klein didn’t delay a second. He immediately contacted Demoness Trissy to confirm that nothing abnormal had happened to her.

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CHAPTER 978
GIFT

On a night with clear moonlight, in the garden of 160 Böklund Street.

A gray rat crawled out of its hole, running straight for the master bedroom’s bed.

As a tiny, black, glue-like blob object floated down, the rat held it over its head like an acrobatic act.

It quickly turned around, ran out of 160 Böklund Street, and headed for the sewer entrance.

At this moment, the gray rat raised its torso up and reached out with two of its paws.

They magically extended as blobs of flesh appeared on its forelimbs!

Then, using its mutated front paws, it moved the manhole cover away without causing a sound!

Without stopping at all, the gray rat headed straight down the sewers, going all the way to the spot where Demoness Trissy previously hid.

It kept digging in a corner until it excavated a mirror fragment from the soil.

Having done that, the gray rat threw the black, sticky object over its head to the side where it was relatively clean. It then retreated to a corner, allowing its body to stretch and turn into a middle-aged man wearing a dark red coat

and a triangular hat. He was none other than Admiral of Blood, who had previously been active at sea.

However, this Senor, along with his clothes and body, was just a thin layer, akin to a figurine cut from paper.

"This rat is quite fat…" Admiral of Blood stroked his chin, but his paper figurine-like body nearly flew up as a result of the cold draft in the sewers.

The person who spoke was none other than Klein. He was inside his master bedroom, turning a rat into his marionette by controlling its Spirit Body Threads. He then made it carry the ritual materials and head down the sewers to contact Demoness Trissy.

Senor, whose arms were flailing about due to the draft, bent down and picked up the sticky blob. This was the remains of Trissy's lock of hair after she burned it with black flames. It could be used for a communication ritual.

Right on the heels of that, he wiped the mirror fragment clean and smeared the material onto it.

After this step, Klein made his marionette take two steps back from the "mirror." With a smacking sound, Senor was plastered to the mossy wall like an oil painting

East Borough. In a room with thick curtains that left it almost dark.

Raven-black, slimy "tentacles" coiled together, forming a huge sphere.

And at the end of these "tentacles," there were either eyes with clear blacks and whites embedded in them, or there were venomous snake heads attached there. The latter opened their mouths slightly as they shot out their tongues in a rather strange fashion. It was quite a harrowing scene.

Suddenly, they flailed up or retracted as the sphere crumbled, layer after layer.

Enveloped in the middle of a sphere was a curled up girl. She had abnormally sweet looks, but her brows were tightly furrowed. Her expression looked slightly warped due to the pain, a look that stirred up one’s sense of pity.

The slimy and disgusting "tentacles" retracted and shrank, finally turning back into their original form -strands of raven-black hair!

The expression of the girl with soft, long hair soothed as she slowly got up and walked to the side of a tiny bed she had partitioned out. Picking up the sleeping gown that had fallen to the ground, she draped it over her.

Then, she curled her black hair and came in front of the full-body mirror. Reaching out her right hand, she swiped across it.

A black flame burst forth as it burned quietly in the air before being extinguished. It left behind a mirror that had turned dark and profound.

In the mirror, lights drifted and rapidly presented the sewers filled with dirty slush. Thinly plastered to the wall was a middle-aged man with an old triangular hat and dark red coat. He was looking down on the girl across an unknown distance, like a famous painting

The girl with the round face and thin eyes watched in silence before laughing.

As her smile bloomed, the dark room seemed to instantly brighten.

She then lightly opened her mouth and said in jest, "Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, is this your craziness and cruelty as the strongest adventurer?

"Or is it the case where I’m only acquainted with a clown?"

Klein wasn’t surprised that Trissy had recognized him as Gehrman Sparrow. After all, he had previously met her in the image of Admiral of Blood Senor, and this pirate admiral had long been hunted by Gehrman Sparrow.

Back then, Trissy was hiding in the sewers due to an injury and was focused on revenge, preventing her from being kept abreast of the news at sea. It was rather unsurprising for her to be unaware of Admiral of Blood’s demise, but things were different after she finished recuperating and left the area. She would’ve been a terrible Assassin and Instigator if she hadn’t investigated her partner. Clearly, Trissy’s past actions indicated that, despite being evil, it didn’t discount her intelligence.

Klein didn’t argue as he controlled the paper figurine-like Senor to smile and simply reply, "Why can’t clowns be crazy and cruel?"

Without waiting for Trissy’s answer, he said, "Any progress on your investigations into the captain of the royal guards?"

Trissy’s expression turned slightly gloomy as she said, "It will need another month at the very least for any results. It might even take two."

"If you need help, you can seek me out," Klein emphasized again.

Trissy scoffed and said, "In Backlund, in this game, strength isn’t able to resolve every problem.

"Of course, I’ve never wasted the opportunity to use others.

"Mr. Gehrman Sparrow, since there’s no need to hide your identity, can you give me a more convenient method of contact?"

Why do I feel like I’m being asked to give my cellphone number… Klein thought about it for a moment before informing her of the incantation to summoning Miss Messenger, as well as the important ritual ingredient of one gold coin.

Trissy didn’t speak further. Reaching out her right hand, she tapped on the mirror’s surface.

The black flames burst before disappearing, restoring the full-body mirror to normal.

In the sewers, Senor buried the mirror fragment back into the soil and made his body shrink rapidly, turning back into a gray rat. It then ran deep into the sewers, allowing itself to be fed by carnivores.

Back in 160 Böklund Street, Klein drew his curtains and returned to the reclining chair.

To be frank, he regretted cooperating with Trissy.

He felt that she was burdened by some will of the Primordial Demoness and was reckless for revenge. She was like a ticking bomb that might explode at any moment.

If Trissy were to mutate, it’s highly possible that she would create a terrifying disaster… I shouldn’t have spared her back then… Klein sighed and began setting up a ritual. He sent the black blob above the gray fog and attempted to divination Trissy’s present location and recent condition.

Twenty to thirty seconds later, he was met with failure.

This only worried him more because such an outcome implied that Trissy had become a Blessed of the Primordial Demoness to a certain extent.

The next afternoon, Klein, who had had breakfast, began instructing Butler Walter and the newly-appointed butler assistant, Richardson, to deliver the gifts he had brought from the Southern Continent.

This filled an entire luggage bag, of which included Fermo coffee beans, East Balam tobacco, River Valley’s grape wine, and human-bone sculptures.

They were to be gifted to the different neighbors around the neighborhood as a sign of goodwill from Dwayne Dantès. It was also to announce his return to the social scene.

"Oh yes, remember to mention to Member of Parliament Macht or his wife that this bottle of River Valley grape wine is suitable for making cocktails. It’s best matched with lemon juice," Klein exhorted Walter.

Particular care was needed in gifting others—it had to take into account the receiver’s preferences, and obviously, the most popular product of the Southern Continent at present, Donningsman Hair Tonic, wasn’t suitable as a gift, as it would only appear to be a veiled attempt at ridicule.

Walter solemnly nodded and said, "Yes, Sir."

After receiving no more instructions from his employer, Richardson glanced at the remaining pile of gifts and asked, "Where will they be sent to?"

"This is for the staff of the bursary foundation. I’ll deliver it myself," Klein said with a smile.

He then pointed at the golden amulet in his hand and said, "I missed the birth of Dr. Aaron’s child, so I’ll need to express my apologies in person. Heh heh, I’ll head over in the afternoon and plan on gifting this amulet with Southern Continent characteristics to that child."

Of course, as a baby, Will Auceptin Ceres probably won’t like it… Compared to this, "He"—I’ll just call him he-would rather have ice-cream… Klein grumbled inwardly after answering Richardson. After the butler and Richardson left, bringing gifts and male servants to the different neighbors, Klein got into his carriage and headed straight for the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation at 22 Phelps Street.

After alighting, he headed forward with his valet, Enuni, carrying plenty of gifts behind him. Along the way, he greeted and gifted any members of the

staff he saw.

Soon, Klein arrived at the second story and arrived at one of the director’s office. He knocked gently on the door.

"Please come in." Audrey Hall’s gentle voice sounded.

As a rather senior Spectator, she had already noticed that Mr. Dwayne Dantès had come to the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation. She had been patiently waiting for him.

Klein pushed the door and entered, taking out a small gift box from his inner pocket before saying with a warm smile, "I’ve returned from the Southern Continent. Well, my business went very smoothly. I brought some gifts for everyone, hoping to share my happiness with everyone."

He had specially mentioned this to indicate to Miss Justice that he remembered her request.

"You leave me no reason to decline it," Audrey said with an expectant smile.

This didn’t mean that she cared for the gift Mr. World gave, but more a result of being curious as to what Mr. World would give.

After receiving the gift box, she tore open the wrapping in front of Dwayne Dantès and discovered an accessory with a white feather adorned with pale yellow patterns as its highlight.

"This is a decorative ribbon," Klein explained. "People of certain social standing in East Balam will enjoy wearing items with such white feathers on various parts of their body. Out of all the places, it’s considered most noble and meaningful to attach it to a hat. This is said to be a tradition from the worship of feathered serpents. Heh heh, feathered serpents are symbols for Death over there."

And the feather he got a Southern Continent craftsman to craft into the hat was a byproduct of the Artificial Death project. It could be sacrificed.

Klein had once obtained three of them. He had used one in Bayam by using the copper whistle messenger and summoning the mutated monster which was corrupted by Artificial Death. The other was sacrificed to Artificial Death in the Southern Continent, allowing him to receive the revelation of Ince Zangwill being possessed by an evil spirit. This was the last feather.

As the present Artificial Death was equivalent to the Evernight Goddess to a certain extent, Klein, who was clearly a Blessed, didn’t need to carry out such acts in subsequent rituals. He could use other materials to replace the feather, so he decided to turn the remaining one into a gift for Miss Justice. After all, she was also a believer of Evernight, and she might be able to contact Artificial Death at some critical moment.

Audrey held her present with a smile as she silently listened to Dwayne Dantès’s description. For some baffling reason, an idea flashed in her mind: Don’t tell me Mr. World really plucked a feathered serpent’s feather for this hat…

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CHAPTER 979
JOY OF LIFE

"The traditions in the Southern Continent are really different from ours." Audrey looked down at the feathered cap in the gift box as she marveled, "But it’s in line with my taste."

The latter half of her sentence was partially genuine and partially out of politeness. On the one hand, she found the processed feather akin to a piece of artwork, and on the other hand, she found its style too obvious and extreme. It wasn’t something she would use as an accessory.

This was akin to how others would have their interest piqued by items with unique and mysterious patterns when visiting ancient ruins. They would be filled with praise over it, but they would seldom purchase similar items to place it at home or use it as an accessory.

Klein smiled in response.

"There are also many stark differences amongst the Southern Continent traditions. It’s almost completely different in East Balam from the highlands and river valley. Of course, they also have their similarities such as their adoration of gold. They believe that this metal possesses magical powers."

As he said that, he pointed at the feather in Audrey’s hand.

"Legend has it that people who wear such accessories would receive the blessings of the feathered serpent, or in other words, Death."

He was hinting to Audrey about how she could use the feather.

As a Sequence 6 of the Spectator pathway, Audrey easily read in between the lines. She understood that the hat accessory allowed her to receive a response from the so-called "Death" at critical moments, bringing about certain effects.

As for how she should use it, it was basic knowledge in mysticism. Audrey had a solid foundation and didn’t require Mr. Dwayne Dantès to explain in detail.

She faintly smiled without revealing her teeth and said, "I really like it. I will attach it to my hat in appropriate situations."

Not bad. It’s so easy talking to Spectators… Klein returned with a smile and pointed at the door.

"I still have presents to hand out."

"You will be the most welcomed person here today," Audrey replied with a smile, a euphemistic way of expressing her gratitude.

Meanwhile, she was a little vexed. She was hesitant about finding an opportunity to inform Mr. World, who had been embroiled in Cuarón’s suicide, about Hvin Rambis. He had shown some deep interest and importance on the matter.

Oh, it’s almost Monday. I’ll leave it until the Tarot Gathering. It will be much easier to communicate when the time comes… I can also seek advice from Mr. Hanged Man and Ma’am Hermit on how to deal with my current situation, especially the problem of being wary against the cues and hypnotism from a High-Sequence Beyonder. After all, I can’t always pray to Mr. Fool ahead of time to receive an angel’s blessing… On careful thought, such a form of hypnotism is truly terrifying… Carrying out instructions without realizing it… Audrey’s mind was awash with thoughts as they bubbled.

This made her suspect that many people in Backlund’s high society had been hypnotized, acting in ways that violated their true intentions and will.

In addition, she also came to realize something.

Every time her parents attended Mass at Saint Samuel Cathedral, the one in charge of the rites was definitely Backlund’s archbishop. And to hold such a post, he was definitely a demigod of the Church of Evernight!

At times, His Grace will even visit in person to chat with us… This is to prevent such matters from happening? That’s why Hvin Rambis’s hypnosis effect on me didn’t go overboard? Audrey watched as Dwayne Dantès left her office. After closing the door and sitting down at her desk, she picked up a fountain pen and mindlessly scribbled on it.

After she reined in her thoughts, the piece of white paper was filled with interlocking circles. There was a face with cold eyes and scattered lines.

At a glance, Audrey tensed up. She immediately used her spirituality and the friction between items to ignite the paper, turning it to ashes. Her random drawing had, in a sense, reflected her true emotions and thoughts!

And to a good Psychiatrist, interpreting such pictures was a basic skill. Therefore, Audrey hadn’t left any traces behind.

After a while, Klein delivered all his gifts and chatted with a few directors along the way. Finally, he entered a room meant for part-time directors like him to rest. He found a pen and paper, sat on the sofa, and began writing after some thought:

"Dear Mr. Azik,"

While in the Southern Continent, Klein had written about Adam’s obtaining of 0-08, his successful revenge on Ince Zangwill with the help of Leonard and Daly. He then summoned the messenger via the copper whistle and sent

it to the sleeping Mr. Azik. Without a doubt, he had yet to receive a reply to date.

Klein wasn’t worried about mentioning Adam and 0-08 in the letter, because the Angel of Imagination definitely knew about his relationship with Mr. Azik. And sharing matters he encountered with someone familiar wouldn’t garner any excessive reaction.

This time, Klein’s letter didn’t involve anything extraordinary. With a smile and gentle scribble, he shared the details about the bursary foundation which he learned from Audrey and the other directors. At the end of the letter, he wrote:

“…This is a really meaningful matter. I feel satisfied and happy about it. Mr. Azik, would you feel the same?

"When you awaken, perhaps you can attempt to do something similar. Every time you revive, you would be able to see the children who had received your help in the past. When that happens, although they might not remember them, they will definitely remember you…”

After finishing the letter and putting down the fountain pen, Klein carefully read it once, and after confirming that there weren’t any problems, he blew the copper whistle, summoned the skeleton messenger, and allowed it to take the letter away.

Following that, he left the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation with his valet, Enuni. He came to the nearby Saint Samuel Cathedral and silently prayed for fifteen minutes in the serene and dark prayer hall.

Like before, Klein came to the donation box and threw a stack of cash in-a total of 80 pounds.

Taking this opportunity, he found Bishop Elektra and had a chat with him and listened to his sermon.

This also announced to the Church of Dwayne Dantès's return.

As for presents, Klein didn't directly give it since he was inside the Goddess's cathedral. Instead, Butler Walter would naturally deliver his gifts to the bishops' residences in private.

…

At tea time in the afternoon, Klein followed his schedule and left 160 Böklund Street and headed to Dr. Aaron's for a visit-Richardson had already informed them in the morning and had received permission to visit.

This time, Klein not only met Dr. Aaron Ceres, but he also met his wife, Wilma Gladys, as well as the newborn and his elder brothers and sisters who were a few years older.

"What a pity that I wasn't able to participate in, uh…" Klein deliberated paused and successfully waited for Wilma Gladys to reply "Will" with a smile.

He reorganized his words and said, "Unfortunately, I was unable to participate in Will's birthday party because of my trip to East Balam.

"This is an amulet that's rather popular over there. It brings children good luck."

As he said that, he handed the golden accessory to Dr. Aaron.

Aaron Ceres wasn't a man who was good with words. He accepted it without declining it and nodded.

"Thank you."

Following that, he held the string and hung the golden amulet into the pram beside him. Shaking it, he asked, "Will, do you like it?"

Wrapped in silver silk, the chubby baby raised his arm, swung it, and flicked the golden amulet away.

Flicked away…

The mood instantly turned a little awkward in the activity room. Klein chuckled and broke the silence.

"This is a reaction all kids have."

At this moment, a maid had delivered the three-layered tray for high tea, allowing the hosts and the guest to switch topics of conversation, allowing the mood to return to normal.

As Klein drank his black tea and ate the pastry, he began talking about all kinds of interesting customs in East and West Balam. It left the couple and their two other children intrigued as they would question him from time to time.

During this process, Klein suddenly turned to face the pram and asked with a smile, "You don’t seem to enjoy my present?"

As he spoke, nothing abnormal happened to the couple and the rest of the people in the activity room as they continued wearing attentive looks.

In the illusion Klein created, he hadn’t finished his recount!

Will Auceptin, who had fleshy arms, scoffed as he said with a child-like voice, "What’s the point in having such gifts?

"You might as well give me Gwadar. At the very least, that can be drunk!"

Klein smiled as he shook his head and said, "I have some news for you. Ouroboros was injured by a particular person and will likely not be able to continue seeking you out for the time being."

He didn’t dare mention Adam’s name or title. He didn’t even think about it, afraid that the leader of the Twilight Hermit Order would notice it; thus, discovering Snake of Fate Will Auceptin’s location.

As for a description like Amon’s brother, Klein had temporarily avoided using it. He had no idea if Amon was still in Backlund and if the frequent mention of the Angel of Time’s name would result in a crossing of fate.

However, Klein believed that the Snake of Fate was likely to guess who had injured the Angel of Fate. This was because the only ones who remained active in the real world and were of a higher level than Ouroboros were limited to Amon and Adam.

He had used the words "particular person" to eliminate the possibility of the assumption of the besieging of several angels or the use of Grade o Sealed Artifacts.

Will Auceptin fell silent for a moment and said, "I did tell you that the deviation in your fate is a good thing in the long term."

After exchanging information, Klein was about to dispel the illusion when he suddenly heard Will Auceptin quip, "Oh, I suddenly have a craving for Gwadar, especially if it’s iced."

"Such beverages aren’t good for a baby!" Klein wore a serious look as he dispelled the illusion, reaching out his hand to receive the cup of ice-cream a maid had delivered.

Then, under Aaron’s and Wilma’s watch, he scooped some ice-cream with the silver spoon and teased the baby with a smile, "Will, do you want some?

"Do you want some?"

Ma’am Wilma immediately chuckled.

"Our Will doesn’t enjoy that."

Just as she said that, Klein stuffed the spoon of ice-cream into his mouth.

"Waaa!"

The baby in the pram immediately let out a loud cry.

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CHAPTER 980
CHOICE OF PARASITIC TARGET

After some placating, Aaron Ceres and Wilma Gladys finally managed to calm down the baby.

Phew… The thin and tall Aaron heaved a sigh of relief and got up. Nudging his gold-rimmed glasses, he nodded at his guest with an apologetic look. After organizing his words for a few seconds, he said, "Sorry about that. Children are often like this."

"Indeed." Klein smiled in reply, indicating that he didn’t mind it one bit.

Following that, he changed the topic of conversation and continued sharing his experiences in East and West Balam.

During this process, he made use of his Beyonder powers once more, making everyone in the activity room fall under the effects of an illusion. Then, he picked up the ice-cream which he hadn’t finished, changed the spoon and got up with a smile. Walking to the pram, he asked gently, "Will, do you want some?"

Without waiting for the chubby fellow wrapped in silver silk to reply, he said with a gentle tone, "You’re born now and should be able to fold a paper crane. This way, I don’t have to visit often. You should know how suspicious it is."

Will Auceptin Ceres glared at him without giving him a reply.

Klein didn’t flinch as he took out a piece of high-quality paper and placed it in the pram.

Then, he bent down, scooping out some ice-cream.

"A price is always exacted for what fate bestows, isn’t it?" Klein chuckled as he swished the spoon in his hand.

In the pram, Will raised his left hand, wiping the tears that hadn’t dried from his face, and mumbled, "For Beyonders of the Fate pathway, the exacted price needs to be paid first before awaiting bestowment."

With that said, the chubby baby grabbed the piece of paper and folded a paper crane with great difficulty.

Klein stood in front of the pram and maintained the stability of the spoon, watching this scene with a smile.

A carriage set off from Pinster Street and headed for Saint Samuel Cathedral.

While passing by 160 Böklund Street, Leonard Mitchell looked out the window and seemingly muttered to himself, "Dwayne Dantès is back as well."

The slightly-aged voice rang out in his mind:

"Fate will ultimately intertwine."

"Old Man, you’re becoming more of a charlatan after you woke up." Leonard couldn’t help but mock.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled without a reply.

After coming to Saint Samuel Cathedral, Leonard entered the study of Backlund’s archbishop, Saint Anthony, under a priest’s lead.

Anthony Stevenson was wearing a black robe with red hues. His eyes were deep and his face clean-shaven. Standing by a cupboard, the shadow created seemed like an unknown existence that observed everything from the darkness. It stirred fear into anyone.

"Your Grace, you summoned me?" Although Leonard had already anticipated it, he still bowed in a rather lacking manner.

Anthony nodded gently and said, "You have already rendered enough services to apply to become a Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock. However, you haven’t finished digesting the Soul Assurer potion; therefore, I’ll be extracting you out of Soest’s team and assigning you some separate missions."

Leonard replied, as per protocol, "I am at your command."

Anthony picked up a stack of papers on his desk and said, "These are cases with suspected paranormal activity. You are to investigate each case, mainly placating or purifying them. If you require additional assistance, you can select members from the Nighthawks team of each area of jurisdiction."

"Yes, Your Grace." Leonard would’ve done similar tasks even if Saint Anthony hadn’t instructed him to do so. Therefore, he had zero objections toward such an assignment.

After receiving the stack of papers, he casually flipped through it and said, "Your Grace, what’s Captain Soest’s team busy with at present?" He had been focused on revenge over the past half-year, making himself appear desultory and insular. This prevented him from building strong friendships with the Red Gloves teammates, but despite that, they were teammates who he had fought alongside with. He couldn’t help but be concerned for them.

"They have been assigned to help Crestet finish a mission," Anthony Stevenson didn’t answer in detail.

His Excellency Cesimir is also in Backlund… Leonard didn’t ask further as he gestured four points across his chest in a clockwise fashion.

"May the Goddess bless everyone."

"Praise the Lady." Anthony did the same gesture.

After leaving the archbishop’s study, Leonard headed down to the basement. He wanted to find a quiet room and list down his upcoming mission and run through them in the assigned order.

Midway while walking down the stairs, he subconsciously looked at the stained windows above him.

The sunlight was shining in, making the artwork made from the stained windows look even more solemn. It also accentuated the tiny bugs and dust that floated in midair.

Upon seeing this scene, Leonard suddenly recalled Old Man’s description of Amon. He had the inexplicable feeling that the Blasphemer was everywhere.

He trembled inwardly as a thought came to him. He quickly asked with a suppressed voice, "Old Man, I have a question.

"What is it?" Pallez Zoroast asked slowly.

Leonard asked with a suppressed voice, "Back then, why didn’t you parasitize a bug? They’re smaller and more concealed. You can easily hide in cathedrals without being worried that Amon would discover you."

"How long can a bug live? Continuously switching parasitic targets is extremely burdensome on the body. This way, not only will recovery not be possible by parasitizing it, but it will even worsen one’s condition and shorten one’s lifespan," Pallez Zoroast harrumphed and said.

Leonard was somewhat enlightened as he pressed, "What about other creatures? Those that live relatively longer lives and can enter a cathedral without being noticed."

Pallez Zoroast immediately chortled before saying, "From the looks of it, you haven’t kept what I’ve said to heart. This will only serve to make you suffer in the future!

"The higher the Sequence is, the greater the inclinations towards losing control is, and the more madness accumulates. This is a trait of the characteristics, and it can only be resisted and suppressed. There’s no way to eliminate it.

"Therefore, for a Parasite, choosing a target for parasitizing requires one to consider these aspects. If one were to parasitize ordinary animals, it’s still alright for short periods of time, but once it goes on for too long, one will suffer the effects of the body’s construct and hormones. Heh heh, everything is reciprocal, isn’t it? A Parasite can influence the target, but so can the target influence a Parasite.

"When one parasitizes an ordinary animal, it’s necessary to frequently talk to someone to avoid forgetting one’s former identity. This way, the chances of exposure is extremely high, and if one doesn’t do that, the host will definitely influence the Parasite, causing them to lose the ability to speak. It will muddle one’s own existence until one doesn’t know he is. It would then result in madness and with the loss of control crushing the Parasite."

Leonard was left alarmed as he nodded slightly.

"I understand… It’s no wonder you are so strict on choosing a parasitic target."

"Are you trying to praise yourself?" Pallez Zoroast tsked. "To us, the best parasitic target is undoubtedly Beyonders of the same pathway. All aspects will be synchronized, and by nurturing them one Sequence at a time, they

can be made as replenishments for one’s Beyonder powers. It would be the best medicine and a potential option for taking over the body."

Upon hearing Old Man speak of such vile and terrifying matters so calmly, Leonard frowned slightly as he secretly heaved a sigh of relief. This meant that Old Man wouldn’t do the same to him.

Pallez Zoroast continued, "The second best choice would be Beyonders from the Seer or Apprentice pathways. The absorption of their powers wouldn’t incur too much a burden on the Parasite, allowing them to quickly recover. "The next choice would then be smart Beyonders of other pathways. At the very least, communication would be good and cooperation would be possible.

"As for you, hehe…”

Leonard was just about to retort Old Man when he suddenly saw a bishop walking down from above. He hurriedly shut his mouth, held onto the railings, and sped up his pace.

…

Half-past seven in the evening, 39 Böklund Street, Member of Parliament Macht’s house.

Dressed in a tailcoat, Klein got off a carriage as he buttoned his clothes. Under the lit fountain’s illumination, he entered the foyer and met Maury Macht, who was dressed in an olive-green military uniform with an orange-red sash across his waist. His chest was covered with medals, accolades of his achievements in war.

His wife, Riana, was wearing a shoulder-exposing dress. She greeted Dwayne Dantès with a smile, "Welcome, our traveler. Everyone has been waiting for you to share your experiences at Balam this time."

"Should I launch a travel column at a newspaper company?" Klein replied with a joke.

Macht knew that Dwayne Dantès had headed for Southern Continent to do business. Furthermore, it was a business he kickstarted. Therefore, after exchanging a smile, he came close and gave him a hug, suppressing his voice by saying, "Well done!"

Klein smiled with a nod and asked, "Do you like the present?"

He was referring to the bottle of River Valley grape wine that could be made into a sour cocktail.

"It was excellent. I still fondly recall the taste," Macht said earnestly.

Klein was about to enter the hall when he noticed something amiss. He did a cursory glance and asked out of puzzlement, "Miss Hazel isn’t in?

"Has she been sent to study at an all-girls public school?"

Riana sighed as she shook her head.

"No, she’s only sick. She’ll head for public school only in September."

"She caught a cold?" Klein expressed the concern a guest should have.

Macht said with a helpless smile, "No, she was bitten by a rabid rat when she was at the manor in the outskirts. Her wound hasn’t healed completely yet."

Hazel got bitten… by a rabid rat… Klein nodded in thought.

"Did she see a doctor?

"Oh, has that rat been caught?"

"The doctor gave her an injection to prevent any infections," Macht said simply. "That rat still hasn’t been found. Perhaps we need to rear a few more cats in the manor."

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CHAPTER 981
HAZEL'S DECISION

After hearing Macht’s reply, and combining what he knew, Klein guessed that the rat in the manor was likely the Marauder demigod which had been by Hazel’s side. As for why it went rabid and bit Hazel, he was unsure.

He nodded slightly and tapped his chest four times in a clockwise fashion.

"May the Goddess bless her."

After saying that, he walked past the host, entered the hall, and waited for the ball tonight to begin.

In a particular bedroom on the third story, Hazel was sitting on a reclining chair feeling dispirited, her feet curled up.

Her left hand was wrapped in thick bandages, but there weren’t any more signs of blood. Her expression was heavy, nothing like her usual arrogance.

In the manor, her teacher, that was in the form of a rat, had suddenly bitten her. This resulted in her being stuck in a similar state, her entire being turbid and muddled. It was as though it wasn’t her hand that was bitten but her heart.

To Hazel, although her arrogance stemmed from her upbringing, with her ability to absorb new information exceeding that of the average person’s, her outstanding looks, her family’s standing in high society, and her maturity compared to her peers, those feelings were still within normal boundaries before she gained extraordinary powers. None of the

aforementioned traits made her feel that she was different from others or that she was fundamentally superior to ordinary people.

Therefore, with her teacher, who maintained her sense of arrogance while being a representation of her fortuitous encounter and the source of her strength, suddenly becoming a real rat—to the point of not being able to speak clearly and even bite her without any reason-it left a deep impact on her. She began to question if supernatural powers represented being extraordinary or a monster.

Amidst her thoughts, Hazel subconsciously pulled her black-green hair to the back of her ear and felt frustrated with the melody that came from downstairs.

At this moment, she heard the creaking sound of the door as she turned her head in hesitation.

Walking in was a gray rat with slick fur. Its eyes were deeper than its kind, closer to dark red.

"Hazel," the rat said in a deep voice.

Hazel was first taken aback before she reeled in delight. She hurriedly stood up and blurted, "Teacher, y-you’ve recovered?"

Just as she said that, she saw gray rats crawling out from the corner of her bedroom, balcony, and bed. All of them had dark red eyes but could only produce squeaking sounds.

Hazel took a step back in shock, overturning the reclining chair. Her body staggered, almost to the point of collapsing. It took her a great deal of effort to recover her balance.

At this moment, she discovered that the red-eyed rats had vanished. The door had been shut tightly, having never opened.

Everything that had happened was a hallucination or a nightmare that stemmed from the worries inside her!

After a moment of silence, Hazel pursed her lips and sighed.

She sat back down, raising her hand to her temples.

As she massaged her temples, she frowned slightly. She had a nagging feeling that what had happened was too surreal.

Her dark brown eyes darted about slightly as Hazel removed the necklace she wore around her neck, clenching it in her palm.

The necklace's seven green gems were equidistant from each other. Embedded around them were tiny diamonds.

At this moment, one of the gems lit up slowly, emitting a green glow, giving her face a sheen and filling her eyes with mysterious symbols.

The scenes from before surfaces in the girl's mind as her blurry dream-like state gradually turned clear.

While observing the scenes, Hazel sensed something amiss. She confirmed that she hadn't been dreaming, nor was it a short hallucination from having her mind go adrift. Instead, she had been thrown into an illusion for nearly ten seconds.

Cryptologist!

This… Hazel's dark brown eyes widened as she muttered a word filled with horror.

She jumped to her feet and looked around anxiously but failed to discover anything.

But the more she looked, the more terrified she became. She had no idea what she would encounter next, nor did she understand what the person who created the dream was up to!

The only thing she was certain of was that the other party's level and strength in the supernatural domain far exceeded hers!

This shattered what little pride she had left.

After a few minutes, the entire bedroom remained silent. The brisk melody from downstairs instantly connected oneself to the current dance steps.

Hazel finally composed herself, believing that nothing would happen next.

Only then did she have the mood or energy to consider the motives of the person who secretly cast the illusion.

As various thoughts surfaced in her mind, Hazel suddenly came up with a theory:

The person from before was here for her teacher!

Through the illusion, the person had confirmed her teacher's current situation!

Is it Teacher's friend, or an enemy? He's definitely headed off to look for Teacher. What do I do? He likely doesn't know where Teacher is hiding… No, all my neighbors know that I was bitten by a rabid rat… Hazel was thrown into panic as she clenched her necklace with increasing strength.

She couldn't be sure of the motives of the other party, nor did she know what she could do.

She wished to head to the manor and inform her teacher, but she was afraid of encountering danger and end up being sacrificed.

Furthermore, her teacher had seemingly lost the ability to communicate. Her warnings might not necessarily be conveyed.

Without realizing it, Hazel stood up and paced about in her bedroom. Finally, she made up her mind. Pursing her lips tightly, she walked to the door and said to her lady’s maid outside, "I’m a little tired. I plan on sleeping now. Don’t let anyone disturb me."

"Yes, my lady," the maid immediately replied.

After closing the door, Hazel began changing into clothes that allowed for greater movement. Her expression was extremely heavy as her teeth bit down on her lip.

She had finally decided to warn her teacher at the manor.

She didn’t wish to become a seemingly arrogant person but, in actuality, was a coward, one who would abandon all principles upon encountering danger!

She found it despicable of herself!

While the bodyguards were focusing their attention on the ball’s attendees, Hazel took the opportunity to enter the garden using a water pipe from the balcony. When leaving 39 Böklund Street, Klein was holding onto a cup of sweet and iced fizzy wine, discussing business in the Southern Continent with a few gentlemen.

He turned his head slightly, glancing at the garden. He had already noticed Hazel’s actions thanks to his intuition.

…Although she’s not a likable girl, she has quite a kind heart… Klein nodded indiscernibly and praised her inwardly.

He wasn’t worried about Hazel’s actions, because to go from North Borough’s Böklund Street to Macht’s manor in Backlund’s northwestern

suburbs would take three to five hours on carriage. And before she arrived, he would've already used an excuse to leave the ball, teleporting over directly to confirm the situation.

Although Macht's manor was in the northwestern suburbs, it was on the other side of the Tussock River. Hence, to head there, one needed to take a detour to an area with a bridge. It was fine in the day, as one could use the steam metro to head to the south side of the Bridge beneath the river. At night, there were only three bridges to consider. It was inevitable to spend five hours traveling.

Of course, as Klein had used Tinder before and had read 2-105 Blood Vessel Thief's information, he had some idea about the powers of the Marauder pathway. Therefore, he suspected that Hazel, who had an item of a higher level, could "steal" the flight abilities of birds and use that short period of time to cross the river. This way, she might arrive within three hours.

Regardless, I'll be faster than her… Klein retracted his gaze and began considering who his next dance partner should be.

Ten in the evening, Moose Manor in the northwestern suburbs of Backlund.

This place originally belonged to a viscount, and it had more than a hundred years of history. Macht had bought it after his marriage, spending tons of money to maintain it every year so as to invite friends over during winter weekends for a vacation.

At this moment, the land steward was arranging for the servants to check every corner and to lock all the windows and doors. This was a necessary procedure before they slept every night.

A few maids walked out of the wine cellar in a group, heading straight for the kitchen to ensure that all flames had been extinguished.

The moment they arrived, they heard squeaking sounds as they looked over, only to discover a grayish-white rat gnawing on a table leg.

This rat seemed to sense their gaze, but it didn’t run. Instead, it turned its head and glared at them with its slightly red eyes.

Meanwhile, there were more squeaking sounds as red-eyed rats ran out from the roof beams, storage cabinets, and all kinds of miscellaneous, even appearing beside the furnace which had some water boiling over it.

The maids nearly screamed in fear.

As members of the lowest classes of society, they were no strangers to rats. They had even killed quite a number. However, it was their first time to encounter so many at once. They couldn’t help but feel a heavy blow to their senses.

"We need to get Guede and the others to deal with this," a maid left the kitchen and suggested in fear.

Another maid nodded immediately.

"Miss Hazel was bitten by a rabid rat… These don’t look normal in any way!"

As they spoke, they retreated a great distance back, distancing themselves from the kitchen.

At this moment, a figure quickly appeared on the table. He wore a white shirt and black vest under a dark-colored formal suit. On his head was a half top hat, and he had a pair of bright leather boots.

This figure slowly lifted his head while holding down his hat. He surveyed the surroundings, revealing his black hair and brown eyes. He had a thin face and cut features. He was none other than Gehrman Sparrow.

Having left the ball ahead of time, Klein returned to Dwayne Dantès's residence and entered his bedroom. Then, he teleported over with Winner Enuni.

Of course, the latter had been left outside the manor to allow for any instantaneous switches in positions.

The rats reflected into his eyes as Klein pulled the human-skinned glove on his left hand, casting his gaze towards the flowerbed in the manor.

Almost at the same time, the rats in the kitchen stirred as their movements turned sluggish. However, they quickly returned to normal.

They had become a Bizarro Sorcerer's marionettes.

And Klein could control as many as 50 marionettes, a number that would rise once he finished digesting the potion!

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CHAPTER 982
BIZARRO SORCERER VS PARASITE

When he cast his gaze towards the garden, the scene of the area was naturally reflected in Klein’s mind.

In the dark corner concealed by the flowers, grayish-white rats spun around wildly like they had been possessed. They kept squeaking as they attempted to push away their own kind and enter the core area.

In the core area lay a gray rat the size of an adult Loen Shorthair-a particular cat breed. Its eyes were slightly red like congealed blood.

Its tail was swishing about rapidly, seemingly in a bid to vent the irascible feelings within.

And whenever ordinary-sized rats approached, it would grab them and bite them to their deaths, causing rat corpses to pile up around it. But even so, this didn’t stop the other rats from surging over.

Upon seeing this scene, Klein suddenly had two thoughts:

First, having his "intuition" boosted by the gray fog was a boon for a Bizarro Sorcerer’s controlling of Spirit Body Threads. This wasn’t apparent in open areas where the owner of the Spirit Body Threads could be instantly determined, but when inside a bustling city or a place with many buildings, Bizarro Sorcerers who lacked "x-ray vision" were unable to determine the owners of the Spirit Body Threads that bunched up from afar. It made it difficult to accurately lock onto an enemy unless they did something

special, making them stand out from others. Of course, Bizarro Sorcerers could also ignore the possibility of collateral damage and just indiscriminately control their targets.

Second, the Marauder pathway demigod that parasitized the rat was already on the verge of losing control. Not only was it several times bigger than when Arrodes showed it, but its condition appeared very unstable. It was filled with a violent and crazy aura.

Thankfully, I came in time. If I had waited a few weeks, who knows what kind of tragedy would unfold… A thought flashed across Klein's mind as illusory black threads appeared in front of him.

At this moment, he was less than fifty meters away from the mutated rat, making it completely feasible for him to control the Spirit Body Threads!

And at this moment, the huge rat with slick fur noticed something. It hurriedly stood up and turned its head towards the kitchen.

A glint flashed in its dark red eyes, instantly leaving the young man wearing a silk hat and black suit pausing in his spot.

It had "stolen" the main thoughts of the antagonizer for the next two seconds, leaving his mind blank. Furthermore, it didn't do the follow-up actions that a Sequence 5 Dream Stealer would've done! Right on the heels of that, this rat raised its right forelimb and attempted to "steal" the enemy's Beyonder powers.

At its level, it was able to "steal" three Beyonder powers from the same target and possess them for two hours. Of course, one attempt was limited to one power.

At this moment, the gigantic rat's thoughts turned extraordinarily sluggish. The actions of it using its powers seemed to be bound by invisible threads, making it appear extremely lethargic.

Initial control of its Spirit Body Threads had been obtained!

Its success at stealing Gehrman Sparrow's thoughts and throwing him into a daze was merely an illusion -a Bizarro Sorcerer's Illusion Creation!

Before Klein properly began controlling its Spirit Body Threads, Klein had already switched places with Enuni. As a marionette didn't possess any self-consciousness or thoughts, it was immune to the Beyonder powers of Thought Usurpation.

How could something that didn't exist be stolen?

And in order to trick the Marauder pathway demigod, Klein had used his illusion powers which had experienced a qualitative upgrade. He had also deliberately made Enuni, who wore Gehrman Sparrow's appearance, put on the corresponding act.

At this moment, he was outside Macht's Moose Manor, his straight line distance from the gigantic rat exceeded 500 meters. However, this didn't stop him from controlling his opponent's Spirit Body Threads. This was because a Bizarro Sorcerer could gift his Beyonder powers to his marionette. This included the control over Spirit Body Threads—the core for converting a target into a marionette!

This also meant that if there weren't any other restrictions, a Bizarro Sorcerer could use their marionette and extend his control of Spirit Body Threads from 150 meters to an unlimited range. After all, as long as there was a marionette placed every thousand kilometers, he could rely on extending his influence by gifting his Beyonder powers.

Of course, there was no ability in the world without restrictions. On the one hand, Klein's maximum number of marionettes was fifty, and it was currently impossible to exceed this number. On the other hand, the only thing that a Bizarro Sorcerer couldn't gift his marionette was the ability to think and be self-conscious. Therefore, the limit of using a marionette to

control a marionette was the limit of his control over a marionette—1000 meters!

Once he exceeded this range, the marionette wouldn’t be able to do anything.

In addition, by gifting his Beyonder powers to his marionette, a Bizarro Sorcerer was effectively separating a maggot that was related to his Mythical Creature form. It was transferred into the marionette’s body via the Spirit Body Threads. Unless he had prepared via giving the same marionette additional maggots, the marionette lacked the means of separating another maggot when converting a new marionette or giving the new marionette his Beyonder powers.

And at present, Klein could only split a maximum of fifty. Exceeding this number exerted a huge burden on his Spirit Body and produced signs of his soul fracturing. Recovery was impossible without effective treatment, and it was possible to not recover, even with excellent treatment. It would only increase the possibility of losing control.

Therefore, through Klein’s experiments, the maximum distance he could control Spirit Body Threads was 1000+150 meters. And to be able to fully control a new marionette, it needed to be within 1000 meters. At the same time, if the marionette were to die, the maggot inside the body would return to his body according to the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence. However, there was a chance of experiencing a loss if the process was interrupted.

While the Marauder pathway demigod’s actions turned sluggish, the rats that had previously been turned into marionettes rushed out from Enuni’s side. They aimed at the garden and opened their mouths in a bid to use Air Cannon to cleanse the target’s location.

Suddenly, a dark red glimmer lit up in the gigantic rat’s eyes.

Instantly, Gehrman Sparrow appeared in the dark corner of the garden, amidst the dead rats. As for the Marauder pathway demigod, it had arrived inside the kitchen where there were plenty of items on the table.

It had "stolen" Gehrman Sparrow’s position!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The marionette rats shot out their Air Cannons without being able to stop midway, hitting the spot where "Gehrman Sparrow" was standing. It left the soil splattering and threw the flowers into the sky. It alarmed the servants in the manor as their bodies trembled violently. They had no idea what was happening and could only frantically run for shelter. The entire garden was leveled by Air Cannon, thinning the layer of soil within. If Klein hadn’t directed the attack in that direction, the manor’s main building probably would’ve collapsed.

Amidst the flying dust, the rats were left dismembered, but "Gehrman Sparrow" remained standing there, uninjured.

Winner Enuni had just released all the good luck he had accumulated!

However, his control of the gigantic rat’s Spirit Body Threads had been terminated as a result. And there were only a limited number of Spirit Body Threads. The rat marionettes were unable to interfere, for it might create pandemonium and cancel each other out.

Hazel’s teacher, the Marauder pathway demigod took this opportunity to regain its freedom. Then, it turned around and raised its right forearm at "Gehrman Sparrow," instantly stealing his Beyonder powers of controlling Spirit Body Threads.

As a Sequence 4 demigod, it could accurately "steal" the power of the target. Typically, there were three options, and with better understanding, the higher the chance of success was. And this time, its luck was pretty good.

Of course, if the target’s level was much lower, and if it clearly knew of the target’s situation, it could "steal" anything it wanted.

Just as it lowered its right paw, the Marauder pathway demigod raised its left paw. The rat marionettes slumped to the ground and could hardly turn their bodies.

This was a large-scale "theft" that stole the rats’ ability to walk!

Right on the heels of that, countless magical symbols appeared in the gigantic rat’s red eyes.

It rapidly "decrypted" the puzzle and found where Klein was.

With a red glint, it raised both paws and instantly appeared beside Klein.

This time, it had "stolen" the distance between the two!

At this moment, the thin-faced young man in front of the rat vanished. Replacing him was a gray rat.

And around the surrounding trees, worms began crawling out as they opened their "mouths."

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Air Cannons bombarded the gigantic rat and ordinary rat.

While Klein was controlling the marionettes in the Moose Manor, he didn’t forget to convert new marionettes around him. This was, after all, a basic trait of a Bizarro Sorcerer. Then, swapping his body with a marionette, he had set up a simple trap!

Dust and soil flew high into the sky as the rat parasitized by the Marauder pathway demigod was completely inundated by it.

After everything settled down, a strong scent of blood emanated from the huge crater. There were pieces of flesh everywhere.

Dead? Klein looked at the blast-filled scene with the eyes of his surrounding marionettes.

However, he quickly frowned because there weren’t any signs of a Beyonder characteristic appearing.

As his thoughts raced, Klein took out a gold coin and flicked it.

As the gold coin landed, scenes surfaced in his mind -revelations from his Astral Projection.

Compared to the past, as a demigod, Klein could use such a simple divination to obtain more information!

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CHAPTER 983
IN YOUR NAME

Pa!

When the flicked gold coin landed in his palm, Klein didn’t even see if it was heads or tails. This was because his mind was fixed on a particular scene:

Amidst the woods, the clouds high in the sky failed to completely conceal the stars that dotted the black velvet sky. The humming, clicking, and thrumming sounds of the insects spread far into the night, mixed with the two commotions of the two "explosions" inside Moose Manor.

Klein rapidly used his knowledge from astromancy, and he roughly gauged the exact location of the scene. Then, his body phased away, appearing beside Enuni before grabbing his shoulder.

During this process, Klein collected the transparent maggots he had implanted in the rats and insects before severing the connection of the Spirit Body Threads.

In just two seconds, he vanished from Moose Manor which was gradually turning chaotic and noisy, teleporting to the spot that he had seen in his mind.

The area was identical to the revelation which Klein had received. It was extremely silent, to the point of being able to hear the breeze wafting through the leaves and trees.

Illusory black threads, representing all the creatures with spirituality in the region, surfaced in Klein’s vision.

There were copious numbers of them, dozens being a gross understatement. To sieve through them and determine which was the problematic one couldn’t be accomplished in a short amount of time.

However, he wasn’t in a rush, because he had confirmed one thing:

His divination results could be trusted as long as the Marauder pathway demigod didn’t possess any high-level items. After all, after becoming a Bizarro Sorcerer, not only were his powers elevated, the gray fog’s powers also seeped deeper into reality. With these two combined, it made his divination powers far more outstanding than most saints, even without heading above the gray fog. It was unlikely that he was weaker than a Beyonder of the Fate pathway of the same Sequence. In contrast, the Marauder pathway demigod’s condition was in shambles with its strength at an all-time low.

Therefore, Klein believed that the demigod was hiding in the woods and hadn’t fled far.

Due to such reasons, he believed that waiting patiently was the best solution.

The Marauder pathway demigod was relatively weak, in an unstable condition, and close to losing control. After experiencing that intense battle and abandoning the rat’s body, the situation only worsened. It was impossible to experience an improvement. Under such situations, if she didn’t replenish herself or recover, it was only a matter of time before problems cropped up. Therefore, Klein could wait, while she couldn’t.

As the humming, clicking, and thrumming sounds spread, Klein waited as he hurriedly converted marionettes. He made Enuni leave the region and hide about a thousand meters away. Meanwhile, he kept note of the

possibility of having his Spirit Body Threads controlled, as he recalled that the enemy had "stolen" the Beyonder power from his marionette.

Suddenly, he heard a sound that resembled the panting that came from deep within the soul.

Right on the heels of that, a hysterical voice sounded from a tree diagonally ahead of him:

"Why are you forcing me?

"Why are you forcing me?

"Why are you forcing me!"

Amidst the sharp voice, the tree’s outer bark rapidly peeled off, revealing the core wood beneath. And on it, holes cracked open as strange worms with about eight circles around them crawled out.

The transparent rings of these worms had many three-dimensional patterns as though time was swirling through them.

Suddenly, Klein lost all his thoughts, losing the Beyonder powers of Air Cannon and Paper Figurine Substitutes. He lost his belt, coat, and hat, making him appear like a sculpture of flesh.

However, to a marionette, this wasn’t too serious a problem. After all, it was no problem for his actual body. The lost powers could be retrieved by switching maggots.

Yes, upon hearing the panting, Klein had swapped places with Enuni!

And a Winner like Enuni had no need to worry about his pants dropping after losing his belt. His waist swelled rapidly thanks to the powers of Faceless, stopping his pants from falling.

New marionettes in the form of insects and rats crawled out and surrounded the mutated tree.

At this moment, a voice with a hint of a smile sounded from an unknown location:

"Calm down. Don’t be angry. Everything will be resolved."

The voice was filled with a persuasive force. The mutation of the tree slowed down as the ringed worms slowly shrank back in.

"Is that so?" Inside the tree, the vicious-sounding voice calmed down. There was some level of blankness to the voice, as though it was about to be convinced.

As for Klein, he found the words extremely reasonable. He couldn’t help but reflect on the reason for pushing a demigod to the brink of losing control.

He had a vague feeling that he had forgotten something and was unable to recall the true reason for coming

Then, he saw a chuckling figure walk out of the woods.

"Relax, I have the means to stop you from losing control. All you need to do is to follow my instructions."

The figure was wearing a black trench coat that resembled a robe. He matched it with black trousers and leather shoes. He had a broad forehead and a thin face. Wearing a tall hat and a striking crystal monocle, he appeared extremely refined.

Klein’s gaze froze as a word resonated through his mind: Amon!

The person before him was Blasphemer, Angel of Time, King of Angels, the son of the Creator-Amon!

Although he knew that it was merely an avatar, Klein didn’t waste any time. He immediately abided by the deepest cries of his heart and used Creeping Hunger to phase away.

During this process, Enuni snapped his fingers and lit the matches in his pocket and fallen leaves a distance away, allowing him to appear beside Klein with Flaming Jump.

Klein grabbed him and vanished with him.

In the event that Amon tried to stop him, or if Enuni wasn’t able to return fast enough, Klein’s plan was to abandon his marionette and Travel far away.

Under such circumstances, the death of a marionette to ensure his survival was definitely worth it!

Luckily, Amon’s attention was placed on the peeling tree. He didn’t stop him or, should it be said, it was the case that he didn’t have the time to stop him.

After Klein and his marionette vanished, Amon halted and turned to look at where the two were originally standing. As though in thought, he nodded slightly and scoffed.

"A Bizarro Sorcerer of Evernight."

He then retracted his gaze and looked at the half-mutated tree and asked with a smile, "A descendant of Jacob?"

"Y-yes, do you know my ancestor?" Inside the tree, the rat demigod asked as though it had grabbed onto a floating board while drowning.

Amon stroked his chin and nodded indiscernibly.

"Of course.

"They tasted excellent." Inside the tree, the descendant of the Jacob family fell silent. Only after a few seconds did a voice filled with horror utter:

"Y-you are Blasphemer Amon!"

Inside the tree hole, the worm with rings began crawling out.

However, they quickly stiffened and froze in their spots.

Amon adjusted the crystal monocle and said with a smile, "That’s too late now, isn’t it?

"It might’ve been of some use if you had struggled and resisted from the beginning, but now… Do you believe that I’m here on my own?"

As he spoke, the trees around him shook as the leaves of different trees ruffled. Birds leaped onto the branches and let out crisp chirping. And even the night breeze had an indescribable feel to it.

"You…” The Jacob descendant inside the mutated tree’s speech came to an abrupt halt. Amon stuffed his hands into the pockets of his trench coat and casually laughed.

"I heard that your family has split into tiny families with zero interaction, afraid that the lot of you will be caught by me, right? Ah right, didn’t you establish a secret organization with Zoroast’s descendants, as well as other Beyonders of the Marauder pathway? I believe it’s called the Hermits of Fate.

"You’re probably a member, aren’t you? Let me see if I can replace you and infiltrate that organization. Heh heh, a secret organization meant to defend against Amon and deal with Amon has Amon participating in it. Just the thought of it is rather interesting."

Having said that, he glanced at the mutated tree that was vigorously shaking and said, "Unfortunately, from what I can see from your fate, you didn’t

undergo a good education in mysticism. You can’t be a member of that organization. Are you the only one left of this Jacob family branch?

"You wished to seek out a secret treasure left by the Jacob family in Backlund, but you ended up seriously injured for some reason and ended up sealed?

"Ha, you even parasitized an ordinary animal. Yet, there are signs of you not talking to humans for an extended period of time… Aren’t you very puzzled as to why you didn’t receive any ‘warnings’ about this from the knowledge contained within the potion or the murmurs when you advanced to Sequence 4? Yes, it’s because I’ve deleted them."

"No!"

A sharp scream filled with anger and viciousness sounded. There was an indescribable pain in it.

The mutated tree’s tremblings intensified until it calmed down at some point.

Streams of light flew out from within and surged into Amon’s body.

Taking out a piece of silk, Amon took off his monocle and wiped it as he mumbled, "How foolish. She actually believed me when I said it’s too late. One flaw with fellows who are on the brink of losing control is that they’re brainless and easily fooled.

"If she had carefully thought about it, how could she not realize the problems within? If I could quickly finish her off and steal her fate, why would I be wasting so much time chatting with her? An avatar is an avatar after all…”

After Amon wore his monocle again, the stream of light that flowed out of the mutated tree had been completed absorbed by "Him."

At this moment, a figure was passing through the woods-Hazel in hunting gear.

She seemed to sense something as she subconsciously looked over, only to see Amon.

Then, she revealed a surprised smile.

"Teacher, have you recovered?"

"Oh, someone has noticed a problem with you. It’s best that you hide!"

Amon listened in silence before curling the sides of his mouth slowly.

"Alright."

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CHAPTER 984
ACTIVE RESPONSE

Klein didn’t directly teleport back to 160 Böklund Street. Instead, he went to sea with Enuni, found a secluded spot, and chanted the honorific name of The Fool.

Then, he took four steps counterclockwise and went above the gray fog. With a beckon, he summoned a paper figurine.

Immediately after that, he picked up one of the Cards of Blasphemy on the long bronze table in front of him, and he placed it inside his body.

Klein suddenly had an additional dark red robe. This appearance seemed to look like rust and settled gunpowder that had been stained by copious amounts of blood. As for his face, it was covered by a dark gold mask. The patterns on its were ancient and set off a contrasting appearance with the crown he wore that was embedded with gems that sparkled red, blue, and green.

This was a change that the Red Priest card brought about.

After repeated experiments, Klein had confirmed that certain traits of the Red Angel card were very compatible with the Paper Angel’s interference effect with fate. It allowed the relevant powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to be further enhanced. Therefore, he had chosen it instead of the Black Emperor or Tyrant cards.

After completing this, Klein, in the form of the Red Priest, picked up a paper figurine and shook it. He then fused it with the gray fog that surged

over, throwing it at the rippling blob of light that represented him offering a prayer.

The paper figurine quickly burgeoned, turning into an angel bathed in golden light. Flames crisscrossed behind it, taking on the form of twelve pairs of wings.

This War Angel then used the secret connection that was generated from a prayer to descend upon the world and enveloped Klein and Enuni with its fiery wings.

Only with this done did Klein relax. Putting down the Red Priest card, he returned to the real world.

He first sought out food for Creeping Hunger before returning to 160 Böklund Street with Enuni. One transformed back into Dwayne Dantès, while the other turned into a young man with mixed-blood.

After combing his hair, Klein walked to the balcony of his master bedroom, looking far into the distance where Macht's residence stood. He discovered that the place remained brightly lit, a clear indication that the ball hadn't truly ended.

Typically, a ball continued until midnight, and of course, people were permitted to leave before then. After all, most people that were willing to dance late into the night were young adults.

Phew… Amon is truly terrifying. Just a battle involving a Marauder pathway's demigod was enough to garner his attention, even if one was in the city and the other was in the suburbs… At "His" level, the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence should be extremely substantial. Yes, I can't eliminate the possibility that the demigod's mutation while being on the brink of losing control had caught Amon's notice… Klein couldn't help but recall everything that had happened, afraid that he would find a thin, monocle-wearing young, refined man sitting in the reclining chair behind him while sipping from a glass of red wine when he turned around.

He felt lucky that he had already become a demigod and could converge the aura of the gray fog to prevent Beyonders of particular pathways from detecting it. Otherwise, with the interest Amon had shown in the past, "His" focus definitely would’ve been placed on Gehrman Sparrow instead of the Marauder pathway demigod. If that had been the case, he might not have left so successfully by teleporting As the Amon in Backlund was likely only an avatar, Klein was still rather confident of the Paper Angel’s interference. He believed that this King of Angels had no means to trace him all the way to 160 Böklund Street from a trail of breadcrumbs and also determine that he was Dwayne Dantès.

But this still didn’t ease his mind. This was because the Marauder pathway demigod was involved in Böklund Street as well!

She had encountered Admiral of Blood here and had been forced to trigger the explosives, finally parasitizing a rat… Here, she had been warned by a mirror, learning about the Marauder pathway angel who was in need of replenishments and that Blasphemer Amon was on the way… As she had refused to answer the mirror’s question, she was struck by lightning, and had to move to Moose Manor… In addition, Hazel—the target she attempted to parasitize but was her student on the surface—was influenced by a powerful illusion tonight, exposing her teacher’s condition… All of these factors combined might make Amon pay a visit… The more Klein thought about it, the more unsafe he found Böklund Street.

From his point of view, just the warning about a Marauder pathway angel in desperate need for replenishments was enough for Amon to take up "residence" in Böklund Street for a period of time!

Of course, there was an extremely small chance that the Marauder pathway demigod escaped and that nothing was divulged. However, Klein believed it was impossible. After all, even he had the confidence of handling the matter himself, much less Amon who had a certain level of control over Marauder pathway existences!

Sigh, I shouldn’t have been wary against the grandpa in Leonard. If I wasn’t worried that "He" would achieve another stage of recovery and cause Leonard harm, everything would’ve been settled rather quickly. I wouldn’t be in this situation of attracting Amon… What do I do next? Regardless, I need to do something. Otherwise, not only will my identity as Dwayne Dantès be at risk, I might even implicate Leonard on Pinster Street and the ordinary people on Böklund Street. Who knows if Amon will suddenly parasitize them or not… As Klein’s thoughts whirled, his expression grew heavy as he began seriously considering eliminating Amon’s avatar.

His first idea was to establish contact with Leonard and come up with a plan with the grandpa in him, Pallez Zoroast. With this Marauder angel’s knowledge of Amon who shared the same pathway, it was likely that "He" could come up with a good plan.

Klein immediately took out his pen and paper in preparation to write. But after making a few scribbles with the fountain pen, he paused.

He found the confidentiality lacking because describing in detail might result in having an effect on fate, allowing Amon to notice it ahead of time!

The more secure method would be to pull Leonard above the gray fog. The discussion can be held there and have him relay it and discuss it with Pallez Zoroast… Apart from this, what else can be done? Report it to the Church and get them to "disinfect" all of Backlund? Klein put down his fountain pen and muttered silently as he considered other proposals.

He soon gave up the thought of reporting Amon, because Leonard hadn’t done so previously. With the understanding that the grandpa in him had of Blasphemer Amon, it implied that this method was useless. Either there was a huge flaw, or it might end up affecting oneself.

It’s better to ask Leonard first and gain a better situation of the exact situation before coming to a decision… Klein quickly made up his mind.

He temporarily suppressed the urge to draw the symbol to ask Arrodes or use the paper crane to contact Snake of Fate Will Auceptin. After dismissing Enuni, he entered the master bedroom’s bathroom, took four steps counterclockwise, and arrived above the gray fog.

Sitting at the seat of The Fool, Klein conjured The World Gehrman Sparrow and made the fake person pray piously:

"Honorable Mr. Fool, please inform Leonard Mitchell that I’ve discovered traces of Blasphemer Amon. I hope that he can head to your kingdom as soon as possible to discuss the subsequent actions. The time will be up to him to decide."

After throwing the prayer’s content into the crimson star representing Leonard, Klein added as The Fool, "There’s no need to hide it from Pallez Zoroast."

In the outskirts of North Borough, in a sparse forest.

Leonard extended his right hand and held down a blurry wild wolf’s figure.

The wolf whimpered as the flames burning in its eyes dissipated, returning to normal.

Its body faded away and vanished into the wind. However, it no longer had the bloodthirsty feeling it previously exuded. All was calm and serene.

In the Northern Continent, after the Pale Era, the seven orthodox Churches, along with the various nations, jointly pushed for a Cemetery Burial act which had been strictly carried out to this day. As the number of humans that turned into ghosts were rare, the only exception involved the difficult-to-detect deaths in the slums or drowning victims that couldn’t be fished out in time. However, the spirits of the deceased weren’t only limited to humans. All kinds of wild animals and all kinds of creatures with spirituality could become specters under certain conditions. Furthermore, it

was impossible for them to head to human cemeteries to have themselves interred.

This often resulted in rumors of ghost sightings in the wild.

Just as he put the wild wolf to rest, Leonard suddenly saw a boundless grayish-white fog appear before his eyes as The World Gehrman Sparrow’s prayers resounded in his ears.

Traces of Blasphemer Amon. "He" is still in Backlund… Leonard’s eyelids twitched as he tensed up immediately.

As he had received Mr. Fool’s instructions, he didn’t hesitate to speak with a suppressed voice:

"Old Man, did you see it? Did you hear it?"

Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice resounded once again:

"No.

"Although I sensed an anomaly, I didn’t see or hear anything. It will only happen if I deepen my parasitization of you, allowing me to directly control your Astral Projection."

Do you think I’m a fool? Hmm, from the looks of it, Mr. Fool’s response is done through the Astral Projection… Leonard thought before he said in deliberation, "Old Man, Klein informed me via Mr. Fool that he has discovered traces of Amon. He wants me to head over to Mr. Fool’s kingdom to discuss this matter.

"Do you have any suggestions?"

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds before he let out a long sigh.

"If he wishes to deal with Amon’s avatar in Backlund, tell him that unless he has the blessings of concealment, the outcome will be as you expect it to

be."

By saying this, Old Man is giving preconditions. "He" means that "He" will only be willing to cooperate with the blessings of concealment? Leonard’s mind raced as he immediately found a dark corner and informed The World Klein via prayer that he could do it immediately.

As for the danger that resulted from losing control of his body in the wilderness, Leonard wasn’t worried since he still had a Marauder pathway angel in his

body.

Before long, he saw a crimson tide surge towards him and inundate him.

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CHAPTER 985
BLESSED OF CONCEALMENT

Above the boundless grayish-white, inside the magnificent palace.

Just as Leonard Mitchell's figure appeared to the side of the long bronze table, he subconsciously stood up and wanted to bow to Mr. Fool.

However, when he looked over, he found the seat empty. No one was sitting there.

Doesn't Mr. Fool usually sit there? A thought flashed through Leonard's mind as he cast his gaze to the other end of the long mottled table.

The World was sitting there silently as though he was fused with the gray fog in an indistinct blur.

"…There's only the two of us. There's no need to deliberately use Gehrman Sparrow's appearance," Leonard casually said to The World as he sat back down.

After discovering Mr. Fool's absence, he instantly became relaxed. He wasn't as reserved as he was in the previous Tarot Gathering—just short of throwing his leg up on the table.

"It's a habit," Klein replied succinctly.

Leonard nodded in thought.

"I heard that Gehrman Sparrow's persona at sea is a cold, reserved, refined, and polite person. Your current performance matches that description very

well. However, you wasn’t like this in the past, Klein. You have to remember that you’re only acting. Do not be affected by your persona as Gehrman Sparrow.”

Hey, I pulled you up here to discuss Amon, not to have a chat! Why do you show so little concern towards your grandpa’s matters? Klein had indeed made it a habit to use The World’s persona in such situations. But when this was pointed out by Leonard, he was a little embarrassed to change back into his original appearance. He tersely acknowledged that he would keep it in mind.

“Did Pallez Zoroast teach you about the part that ‘you’re only acting?”

“Yes,” Leonard answered frankly.

This grandpa seems pretty good. He mentioned such crucial information to Leonard… Compared to “Him,” the rat demigod from before was really up to no good. She didn’t teach Hazel any of the most common knowledge. Even if she did, she distorted some of it. Heh heh, no matter how unaffiliated you are, how could they not know anything at the level of a demigod? Even that half-crazy sea serpent, Kalvetua, knew how to respond to rituals or obtain sacrificial items. It even knew some theurgy and how to perform bestowments… Klein established a first impression of Pallez Zoroast.

However, he wasn’t hasty to make a judgment. After all, fishing was an activity that required bait. Just one instance didn’t prove much. Seeing Klein being silent, Leonard cut the small talk and got down to business.

“Where did you discover traces of Blasphemer Amon?”

Klein went straight to the point.

“I was pursuing a demigod of the Marauder pathway who was on the brink of losing control. However, I ended up encountering Amon in the outskirts of Backlund. All I could do was use Mr. Fool’s powers to directly escape.”

“Amon’s avatar really is still in Backlund…” Leonard sighed before he asked in a rather curious and desultory manner, “Why were you pursuing a Marauder pathway demigod who’s on the brink of losing control?”

After he asked the question, he realized something and swiftly added, “If it involves some plans of Mr. Fool, pretend as though I never asked.”

Why? Isn’t dealing with Beyonders on the brink of losing control or those who have lost control the duty of a Nighthawk? Klein sighed when he heard Leonard’s question.

It stirred up memories of his time in Tingen City.

In that short two plus months, he had handled many similar matters. It included the Mandated Punisher of the Church of Storms who turned into a monster, Hood Eugen’s loss of control, and Old Neil’s corruption by the Hidden Sage. Although they were only a handful, they left a deep impression on him. It drilled certain actions deep to the bone.

Therefore, after taking into account everything that he knew, and coming to the conclusion that the Marauder pathway demigod was on the brink of losing control after rabidly biting someone, he didn’t hesitate and used his illusion from downstairs. From that, he gained confirmation from Hazel and didn’t even wait a day or two to make preparations. All he did was do a divination above the gray fog and came up with a rough plan before taking action.

Such matters were emergencies for him!

In addition, Klein had long had the intention of getting rid of the Marauder pathway demigod because the malintent she had shown when dealing with Hazel was obvious. Furthermore, she had tried to entice Miss Magician to seek out treasure that was in actual fact a trap. If he wasn’t a demigod back then, which meant a great difference in strength, he would’ve taken action back then. Besides, he was also afraid that he would trigger unnecessary accidents.

It was precisely because of this that he followed his predetermined plan to eliminate her once he confirmed the Marauder pathway demigod's condition.

The first stage of his plan was to lure the enemy out of Moose Manor to prevent her from producing her incomplete Mythical Creature form before dying, as that would've affected the ordinary people. The result was pretty satisfactory. With himself as the bait, he achieved his goal, but he failed to use the Air Cannon bombardment to finish the battle. This made the Marauder pathway demigod flee into the woods and parasitize a tree.

Klein actually had a second stage to his plan and had even prepared contingencies in the event he failed to eliminate her. To his surprise, Amon suddenly appeared, making him terminate all his plans and flee without any hesitation. Klein's contingency was to let a marionette escape the battlefield and write to the experimental demigod byproduct of the Numinous Episcopate, Patrick Bryan, to get his help. This Undying likely possessed the ability to traverse the spirit world after all. And if there were any additional unforeseen circumstances, he could summon Miss Messenger and make payment after the deed.

As his memories surfaced, Klein replied to Leonard with a sighing tone, "A secret."

After pausing for a second, he asked, "Why didn't you find an opportunity to inform the Church of Evernight about the arrival of Amon's avatar in Backlund?"

Leonard hurriedly gave an explanation, indicating that if Amon's actual body were to arrive, a deity's descent was almost certain. He also explained that Amon could use the death of "His" avatar to see the corresponding changes in destiny; thus, finding the source of the stir and figuring out the activity range of the mastermind. It was also Amon's style to circle about a superficial avatar but hide a dozen, dozens, or hundreds of avatars. Amon's avatars could parasitize all kinds of creatures with spirituality. If one wasn't a demigod, they wouldn't even notice the parasite.

Towards the end, Leonard informed Klein in detail about the example Old Man had raised of how Amon would steal one's destiny.

This sent a chill running down Klein's back, thankful that he hadn't been rash in dealing with Amon. Otherwise, Mr. Fool might've been replaced.

It's no wonder Leonard didn't report the matter… For Amon to appear so openly, "He" is actually fishing. Furthermore, he has even more avatars hiding in secret, and "He" can parasitize the microbes in the air… This alone sends my scalp tingling. The creatures I can control at the moment can't even reach that state. The smaller the creature, the harder it is to see the Spirit Body Threads. It's quite a special case… Sigh, I can't use the Church's power, unless it's done by someone who is without any problems in every aspect… Klein commiserated as he gained a deeper understanding of Amon's terror. It left him a deeper impression.

From his point of view, Leonard was an excellent candidate to report the matter to the Church of Evernight, but with Pallez Zoroast parasitizing him, he didn't dare expose his existence to Amon.

In addition, The Hanged Man could also shoulder this responsibility, but he was unable to provide the source of the news. This meant problems that deserved deeper investigations into.

One choice after another flashed across Klein's mind. Finally, he paused on himself-his identities as Klein Moretti and Gehrman Sparrow!

As a Blessed of Evernight, it's entirely reasonable for me to inform the Church about Amon's appearance in Backlund. Amon won't be able to pick faults with that.

And having involved myself with the battle with the Marauder pathway demigod tonight, as the Bizarro Sorcerer who witnessed Amon and is now in possession of the knowledge that the Angel of Time's avatar is here in Backlund, it's also very normal and not something that will garner Amon's suspicion. At the same time, as I'm a Blessed of Evernight, just the loss of

an avatar likely won’t incur “His” full wrath for revenge. After all, “He” might be facing a very possible trap-a deity’s descent! Having a backer really feels good… However, a price is always exacted for what fate bestows… Klein quickly came to a conclusion over the matter.

Then, he habitually changed his point of view and began considering this matter from Amon’s point of view.

Amon is definitely no stranger to Bizarro Sorcerers. “He” can determine my pathway from my control of the marionettes and my swapping of locations.

Since Amon allowed a Bizarro Sorcerer to flee, “He” must’ve made preparations to be exposed. “He” might even be hoping to attract the target “He” is looking for.

I was using Gehrman Sparrow’s face, but that doesn’t imply anything. A Faceless’s appearance is the least of one’s concern… Hmm, then how would Amon determine my identity? A powerhouse that lurks in the dark and a demigod of the Seer pathway… As the Church of Evernight and the Secret Order are in control of the formulas, ingredients, and a mermaid, there are almost no unaffiliated Bizarro Sorcerers. The descendants of the Antigonus family have all been wiped out. Therefore, a Bizarro Sorcerer is either from the Secret Order or a secret proxy that the Church of Evernight secretly nurtures…

Together with me being in Backlund, the answer is almost obvious…

Due to these reasons, Amon wouldn’t find it difficult to determine that the Church of Evernight is aware of “His” whereabouts and will begin an operation to wipe “Him” out. My reporting of “Him” will be within expectations. Not doing so would be abnormal…

Yes, “He” will definitely be hiding. Even if “He” replaces the identity of that Marauder pathway demigod, “He” wouldn’t come to Böklund Street anytime soon!

Having made this judgment, Klein immediately felt a little more relieved because it meant that he would have plenty of time to prepare!

“What ideas do you have?” Seeing Klein’s prolonged silence after he finished his description, Leonard couldn’t help but ask.

Klein reined in his thoughts and asked without answering him, “What suggestions does Pallez Zoroast have regarding this?”

“He’ said that if you wish to deal with Amon’s avatar in Backlund, you have to first obtain the blessings of Concealment,” Leonard replied truthfully.

Blessings of Concealment… Pallez Zoroast is openly trying to test me. Half the symbol behind The Fool’s seat represents concealment… Using Paper Angels and the Red Priest card, I can stir the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog, making it possible for me to disrupt Amon’s avatar. However, it’s probably unable to prevent “Him” from prying into fate itself… However, I still have another identity as Evernight’s Blessed, and another title of the Goddess is the Mother of Concealment… Is eliminating Amon’s avatar considered paying the price or receiving a bestowment? Seems like both… Klein thought before replying in a deep voice:

“Tell Pallez Zoroast that I’m a Blessed of Concealment. I will attempt to pray for help.”

He was referring to being the Blessed of the Mother of Concealment, but it was certain that Pallez Zoroast would understand it as being The Fool’s Blessed.

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CHAPTER 986
THE “INFECTIOUSNESS” OF PARASITIZING

So Mr. Fool also has authority in the aspect of concealment… Leonard came to a realization as he understood why Old Man had specially mentioned the need for the blessings of concealment.

Without waiting for his reply, Klein added, “In addition, tell Pallez Zoroast that Amon might very well know that there’s a Marauder pathway angel in the vicinity of Böklund Street.”

This… Leonard’s pupils dilated as he blurted out, “How would ‘He’ know that?”

It’s not convenient to tell you why… Klein mumbled inwardly before replying rather sternly, “It’s not like I’m Amon.”

“Which of ‘His’ actions or words made you come to this conclusion?” Leonard asked subconsciously.

No, it’s me who “told” “Him”…Klein chuckled as a response.

Indeed… Leonard nodded and said, “No problem. I’ll inform Old Man of this.”

He paused for a moment before asking, “Are you waiting for ‘Him’ to give a detailed plan?”

Klein tersely acknowledged.

“When it comes to the knowledge of Amon and the Marauder pathway, few are better than ‘Him.’””

Having said that, Klein, who had determined that Amon wouldn’t come to Böklund Street any time soon, calmly added, “There’s no need to be in a rush to respond. Give me the feedback at tomorrow’s Tarot Gathering.”

From the looks of it, things haven’t reached a critical stage yet… Leonard figured out the most important information from Klein’s words. He nodded slightly and said, “Alright, we will discuss this in detail at tomorrow’s Tarot Gathering.”

After settling this matter, Klein immediately got up and bowed in the direction of the “door of light.”

“Mr. Fool, we are done.”

Leonard stood up, but before he could do anything, his vision became a blur as the crimson stellar light inundated him.

When he snapped awake, he found himself in the sparse forest on the outskirts of North Borough.

“Is there anything you wish to tell me?” Pallez Zoroast’s slightly-aged voice sounded.

Leonard cleared his throat and said, “Klein told me that he’s a Blessed of Concealment. He can attempt to pray for help.”

“Blessed of Concealment. Indeed…” Pallez sighed and said, “Tell him that as long as he can really gain the blessings of Concealment, I’m willing to provide help when it comes to dealing with Amon and finding all ‘His’ avatars hiding in Backlund.”

Leonard wasn’t surprised by this answer as he chuckled.

“Old Man, you don’t sound as weak as you make yourself out to be!”

Pallez Zoroast chuckled without a hint of anger in his tone.

“Didn’t you read through Roselle’s Quotes? I recall that there’s a saying that a starving camel is still bigger than a horse.”

“That will depend on the breed of horse and camel,” Leonard retorted habitually before asking, “Old Man, how should we deal with Amon? Do you plan on using yourself as bait?”

“Ahem!” Pallez snapped back, “If that were the case, what we’ll be facing will be Amon’s actual body and not ‘His’ avatars. When that happens, there’s a high chance that it will instigate a deity’s battle. I might still have a chance of escaping. As for you, perhaps you will return to Evernight’s Tenebrous Heaven.”

“…” Leonard could only reply with a chortle.

Pallez Zoroast continued, “Unlike the similar powers of other pathways, Amon’s avatars can rapidly strengthen ‘Himself’ by absorbing the Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway, thereby splitting even more Worms of Time, allowing him to parasitize different creatures. As long as there’s enough Beyonder characteristics, this process can keep happening…”

“I-isn’t this like the spread of a plague?” Leonard felt a chill run down his back once again.

If one had enough Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway, Amon’s avatars could go from parasitizing one person to the entire city!

“Pretty much.” Pallez Zoroast affirmed Leonard’s guess and sighed. “To deal with Amon, this is the only way to take action. Using Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics at the demigod level to bait ‘Him’ out. As long as you successfully finish off one of his avatars, there are ways to seek

out and eliminate the rest. However, Amon is a master of deceit. We need to be careful; otherwise, it might appear like we are baiting ‘Him,’ but in actual fact, ‘He’ is baiting you. On this matter, concealment is of utmost importance!”

“I understand.” Leonard sighed and turned to ask, “How strong can Amon’s avatar be?”

Pallez Zoroast fell silent for a few seconds as though in recollection. Finally, he said, “In theory, ‘His’ strongest avatar can reach the equivalent of a Sequence 1, but it’s almost impossible for ‘Him’ to do so. This will make his mental state unstable and show signs of losing control.

“Typically, one of ‘His’ avatars is a Worm of Time, each starting off as a weak Sequence 4. However, each possesses the trait of an angel capable of shattering Beyonder characteristics. By absorbing sufficient amounts of Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics, such an avatar can reach a level equivalent to a Sequence 2. However, Amon seldom does so. ‘His’ avatars will automatically fracture and create even more avatars.

“Furthermore, with the actual situation in Backlund, it’s very difficult for ‘Him’ to gather enough Beyonder characteristics that can raise ‘His’ avatar to Sequence 2.”

Leonard thought carefully for a moment before asking, ‘So, we will be facing a group of Amons. Amongst them, a majority have the strength of a weak Sequence 4, with a minority having the normal standards of a Sequence 4, while an extremely small minority reaches Sequence 3?”

“With Amon’s style, it’s likely the case. However, you have to remember that Amon is good at deceit,” Pallez Zoroast warned. “In addition, based on the time since Amon’s avatar arrived in Backlund, the number of Marauder pathway Beyonder characteristics ‘He’ has gathered to date can’t be too much. After all, this is Backlund. Also, if the situation isn’t right, ‘His’ avatars will use the strongest one as the center and automatically gather together to achieve an elevation in strength. The most important matter

when dealing with Amon is to not let matters develop to this stage. Otherwise, there's no stopping Amon from escaping even if an angel of the Concealment domain arrives."

"It's truly difficult to deal with 'Him." Besides, it's just an avatar 'He' randomly threw out to develop themselves. As expected of a King of Angels…" After Leonard made a poignant sigh, he suddenly recalled Klein's reminder and hurriedly said, "The Angel of Time has apparently already locked onto a Marauder pathway demigod. Klein said that he encountered Amon while pursuing the demigod. Also, Amon seems to know that there might be a Marauder pathway angel hidden in the region around Böklund Street…"

Pallez Zoroast fell silent once again, remaining that way for a pretty long period of time.

After a while, with Leonard unable to stop himself from prodding for a response, "He" lamented with a sigh, "Why is your former colleague as troublesome as you?"

"What?" Leonard wore a blank look.

Palle Zoroast said in a peeved manner, "The reason why Amon knows that there's a Marauder pathway angel around Böklund Street is likely due to him!"

"Old Man, y-you have the ability to decrypt?" Leonard asked in puzzlement.

Pallez harrumphed.

"I was using my brain!

"Otherwise, why do you think there's the prefix of Böklund Street?"

…That’s true. Anything that has to do with Böklund Street can’t avoid Dwayne Dantès… Could it be some problem that fellow, Klein, created? Only then did Leonard come to a realization.

At this moment, Pallez sighed.

“Thankfully, he only said an angel and not my name. Otherwise, I suggest that we immediately leave Backlund.

“Tell him that there are currently two solutions:

“First, it’s to seek out a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact of the Marauder pathway or find a demigod of the Marauder pathway. Using them, we design a trap. This entire process requires the blessings of Concealment. Furthermore, it needs to be natural, reasonable, normal, and in no way incur suspicion.

“Second, wait for Amon to enter Böklund Street. He might do a combination of ‘replacing someone’s identity’ and ‘infiltrating through the air.’ Therefore, your former colleague needs to see through the grafting of fate or notice the abnormalities in the microbes. Otherwise, no matter what plans are employed, it will simply be feeding Amon.”

Leonard’s eyelid twitched when he heard that as he solemnly nodded.

“I’ll discuss these matters with him tomorrow afternoon.”

“Alright.” Pallez Zoroast sighed and said, “Also, if all the Amon avatars in Backlund can be eliminated, most of the Worms of Time left behind will belong to

me.”

As a form of replenishing himself? It’s no wonder Old Man is willing to take the risk… Leonard asked in enlightenment, “Do those Worms of Time have the Beyonder characteristics of the Marauder pathway?”

“It might be the case in my hands, but not necessarily for others,” Pallez explained simply. “The Worms of Time left when Amon’s avatars die will indeed contain a sufficient amount of Beyonder characteristics in the beginning, but they will quickly deplete and return to the main body. The corresponding power is needed to prevent this phenomenon from happening.” Leonard first nodded before asking in confusion, “Why was the Luck Siphon charms made from the Worms of Time so powerful?”

Pallez instantly scoffed.

“Have you forgotten what the essence of the charm

is?

“Its essence is the power obtained from a high-level existence. It then uses a material that can handle this power, as well as the powers obtained from the corresponding symbols, to stabilize it. The Worm of Time’s role is to be a unique vessel. If the level is high enough, its essence is compatible, and there is sufficient spirituality, the requirements will be met.”

“Therefore, the power of the Luck Siphon charm actually comes from Mr. Fool?” Leonard asked in thought.

Pallez Zoroast chuckled and said, “Yes, you can try praying to Amon as well and use ‘His’ power to create Luck Siphon charms.

“Of course, the uniqueness of the vessel material will also affect the effects of the final product. In other words, different special materials will lead to different characteristics in power based on the response. Sigh, charms are a very profound and complicated piece of knowledge. It’s not something that can be completely grasped by having some cursory education. You have to put more effort into

it.”

Leonard immediately felt somewhat ashamed.

On Monday afternoon, using the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog to check on Hazel’s family to confirm that there weren’t any problems in the meantime, Klein patiently waited for the convening of the Tarot Gathering.

Dark red beams shot up in the ancient palace before gradually calming down.

Without a pause, Audrey got up and bowed towards the end of the long mottled table.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Fool~”

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CHAPTER 987
WAREHOUSE CLEARANCE

After the greetings, everyone took their seats. Audrey swept her gaze across the third Card of Blasphemy placed beside Mr. Fool's right hand. She suddenly came to a realization that she had forgotten to obtain Roselle's diary entries from the Psychology Alchemists this week.

I've been caught up with the problem with Hvin Rambis all week… Audrey, who felt that she had already brightened up, instantly felt a little melancholic.

At this moment, Cattleya had looked towards the seat of honor at the end of the long mottled table. She bowed her head and said, "Honorable Mr. Fool. I haven't received any Roselle diary entries this week as well."

Queen Mystic hasn't provided any of the emperor's diary entries for two consecutive weeks. Did something happen? Leisurely sitting in his high-back chair, The Fool Klein felt somewhat puzzled as he couldn't help but have pessimistic thoughts.

However, he swiftly denied this possibility because Ma'am Hermit didn't show any anxiety or concern!

With the way Admiral of Stars presents herself as a fledgling in need of her mother in the dream world in the ruins of the battle of god, she definitely wouldn't be this calm if Queen Mystic doesn't reply to her for two consecutive weeks. Her anxiety might even prompt her to seek The Fool's help… That also means that she has received a reply from Bernadette in the past two weeks, but none of Roselle's diary entries were provided… Klein nodded gently and replied Cattleya calmly, "No hurry."

After saying that, his thoughts raced as he began analyzing the reason for Bernadette's actions.

First, Klein eliminated the possibility that she no longer had any more Roselle diary entries. Combining the frequency at which the emperor wrote diary entries, he surmised that the compiled diary would exceed ten standard books. Even if Bernadette only had a third of that, she was definitely capable of producing one or two books. In addition, the diary entries she had previously provided were just a tiny minority which touched on crucial intelligence.

Second, Klein didn't believe that Queen Mystic had gained the entire truth from the answers he had given.

Finally, he was also certain that she couldn't decipher the simplified Chinese she had in hand from the tidbits of feedback she received. After all, he didn't give a detailed translation, but vague answers comprising of a few words.

Combining all three points, he suspected if the diary entries Bernadette planned on providing next would be even more important. They were more key and pointed to a certain secret or extremely special, questions that made one unsure if they wanted to know the answer. Thus, this Queen Mystic was presently in a dilemma!

It's likely the case… I wonder what the emperor will write about. Besides, how is Bernadette able to know the importance of the entry… I should remember to get Ma'am Hermit to pass on my requests… While in thought, Alger had already turned to look at Leonard.

"I apologize. There's still no news of mystical items that meet your request at the moment."

"That's very normal. That's right. Uh, mystical items from Sequence 5 and 6 aren't common to begin with." Leonard nodded in understanding.

He was originally sitting very straight, but when he found that The Moon and The Magician weren't so uptight, he also relaxed, relieving the straightening of his back.

Upon seeing this, Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow and said with a hoarse voice, "I have a mystical item that suits your requests in various aspects. It's just that it has quite a number of negative effects that make it difficult to avoid. Do you want to consider it?"

He was referring to the Word of the Sea.

Klein had never had the intention of selling this item that almost required sealing to Leonard, as he felt that his dear poet friend couldn't withstand the negative effects of Word of the Sea. The belting of songs that didn't discriminate between ally or foe, the trait of tripping the wielder, or the flaw of being prone to lightning strikes weren't easily avoided. Klein was only able to use it by teaching the Word of the Sea above the gray fog a good lesson, and having Winner Enuni wield it to not be affected. He had even converted the flaws into something that could aid him.

However, after considering how Leonard had a Sequence 1 Marauder pathway angel parasitizing him, Klein had the feeling that Leonard might have the means to resolve the problem. Therefore, he ultimately made an inquiry.

"Oh, tell me about it." Leonard believed that Klein wouldn't scam him, so he expressed his intentions of getting to know the exact situation.

The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at The Hanged Man and said slowly, "It can release lightning on a target…"

He roughly described the Beyonder powers of the Word of the Sea and the negative effects, leaving Leonard somewhat enticed despite frowning.

It can actually be used as a staff to allow me to fly… Even at Sequence 5 Spirit Warlock, I'll need to seek out a suitable spirit before I can fly…

Besides, the offensive strength really is formidable. There are quite a number of traits… But the three negative effects are quite terrifying… I'll return to ask Old Man to see if "He" has any means to reduce the negative effects… Leonard pondered for a few seconds before saying:

"I'll take some time to consider it. How about I give you an answer next week?"

"No problem," The World Gehrman Sparrow replied without any hint of surprise.

As for the other members, even if they were interested in the beginning, all of them gave up the thought of inquiring about the price once they heard the negative effects that the Word of the Sea possessed.

At this moment, The Fool Klein's mind was focused on another matter. He was wondering if he should take this opportunity to do a "warehouse clearance sale."

He had advanced to Sequence 4, and after becoming a demigod, many of the items and characteristics he had before were no longer of much use.

I can keep Creeping Hunger. I should keep it just for Traveling alone. In addition, it can Graze one Sequence 4 saint. It has room for further growth. Furthermore, the combination of the various Beyonder powers it has is pretty good… The value of Death Knell is no longer that great, but after activating Lethal Attack mode, the damage it does on a fixed target exceeds that of Air Cannon. At the very least, I can still use it at Sequence 4. Yes, it also has room for growth… The first two items that surfaced in Klein's mind were the two items he frequently used.

From his point of view, as long as he obtained more powerful bullets, he could produce terrifying effects with Death Knell. The only problem was that such bullets were equivalent to high-level charms, nothing that could be easily found. Even if he sought out the materials to make them himself,

he had to consider the chances of success when praying to some high-level existence or if it was possible for there to be a backlash.

On this aspect, Klein came up with a few planspray to the Goddess; request Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin to provide help; go through Leonard to get Pallez Zoroast's help; use the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog and also get Leonard to make a trip back to Tingen under the guise of a mission, so as to steal some of the powers of the Eternal Blazing Sun's divine blood from 3-0782, the Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem.

Flaring Sun Bullets are definitely the nemesis of creatures like evil spirits… I have some idea on how to use the materials via borrowing the power of the mysterious space above the gray fog. Amon's Worms of Time can be used to make Luck Siphon charms. My Worms of Spirit can also be made into Beyonder bullets. As for how it can be done, I'll need to ask Pallez Zoroast… Klein began anticipating the upcoming chat with Leonard.

Worm of Spirit was the name he gave to those transparent maggots.

Following that, he began considering the other items and characteristics.

Sun Brooch? I currently lack such powers and items… Although I can use the control over Spirit Body Threads to deal with evil spirits, I can keep it and allow my Paper Angel to have one more additional change. Besides, I can also lend it to Danitz from time to time.

Flower of Blood? I can't sell it. The Tarot Club doesn't have any Aurora Order members. I'll continue letting my marionette use it. Having one additional life is one additional hope.

Green Essence? I can sell this. I can transfer my ailments already. Creeping Hunger also has a Doctor grazed.

Murloc Cufflink? There's no need for this either. If I have a sudden need for its powers, I can transform into a huge fish. And in the long term, I can just

head above the gray fog to use Sea God Scepter to augment myself with the effects.

Broken Finger? I wonder if anyone would want it. Besides, I haven't fully investigated why the rat demigod was sealed. It might be of use.

I have 1 purifying bullet, 6 demon-hunting bullets, and 2 exorcism bullets left. I'll just randomly use them. There's no need for me to sell them.

Biological Poison Bottle? Sigh, I haven't been able to sell it all this time.

Blatherer's aura? This can be used to make charms or bullets. I'll temporarily not sell it. But herein lies the problem, am I to pray to the Dark Side of the Universe? That can be struck off the list of options. I'll see if there are any replacement plans in the future.

An Interrogator Beyonder characteristic, a Lunatic Beyonder characteristic, 15 ml of a Thousand-faced Hunter's blood, 40 grams of Spirit World Plunderer powder, an eyeball of a six-winged gargoyle… Tarot Club members have no need for these. I might be able to reward the believers of Sea God or the Resistance in Rorsted Archipelago… As these thoughts flashed across his mind, Klein quickly made a decision.

As for items which were at least at the demigod level such as the Sea God Scepter, Groselle's Travels, the Giant King's Court key, he didn't consider selling them.

Then, he made The World Gehrman Sparrow say, "I have two mystical items for sale. Their levels are relatively low.

Cattleya immediately replied, "A low level doesn't mean it's useless. Many Low-Sequence Beyonders powers can even turn the tides of battles involving Sequence 5 Beyonders. I'm rather interested in knowing the detailed situation of those two mystical items.

Klein nodded gently and described the uses and flaws of Murloc Cufflink and Green Essence. After he was done, he said, “Murloc Cufflink for 500 pounds, Green Essence for 1,000 pounds.”

Just as he said that, Audrey raised her arm.

“I wish to buy the Murloc Cufflink.”

She actually wished to say that she wanted both. After all, the two mystical items have extremely minor negative side effects. However, considering how others might have their needs, she found it inappropriate for her to take them all. Audrey finally decided to only take Murloc Cufflink.

This could provide her a layer of illusory scales, preventing her from being easily caught. And more importantly, she didn’t know how to swim. This could effectively make up for her weakness. As for the heat and the dry weather easily causing fatigue, she wasn’t too worried about it. This was because, be it in East Chester County or Backlund, the temperature seldom exceeded 300C. The humidity was also rather high.

Seeing Miss Justice having her eyes on Murloc Cufflink, the other members wisely gave up without raising the price, allowing the trade to quickly come to an end.

Following that, Alger bought the Green Essence ring. To him, although the water domain had certain restorative spells, they were inferior to a dedicated item. As a Beyonder who often had to engage in melee battles, it was of great importance.

As for attracting mosquitoes, Alger wasn’t bothered. This was because he had illusory scales beneath his skin, preventing him from being afraid of bites.

After the transaction segment came to an end, Emlyn cleared his throat and asked a question.

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CHAPTER 988
JOINT OPERATION

Emlyn couldn’t help but clasp his hands together, lift up his chin, and say to Miss Magician diagonally opposite him, “I’ve already confirmed that the ancient abandoned castle in Delaire Forest is an internal test that the Sanguine had given me, having hidden the key situation.”

With that said, he felt as though a weight had been lifted off his chest. He no longer felt as hesitant, embarrassed due to the difficult situation he was in.

He surveyed the area and looked for Ma’am Hermit’s and Mr. Hanged Man’s reaction. He realized that they appeared to have expected it, showing no signs of surprise.

From the looks of it, they had already an idea when Miss Magician mentioned the problem with the intel… Emlyn nodded his head in secret and added before Miss Magician replied, “I’m very sorry. I will refund you the 300 pounds for the intel fee. In addition, I’ll pay you another 300 pounds. Also, I will punish the Sanguine who deliberately omitted information.”

Although Mr. Moon always wears a proud demeanor, he’s rather sincere when a mistake has been made. He didn’t find an excuse to push the blame onto… However, I’ve already obtained the ancient wraith’s cursed item and remnant spirituality, so the matter is already over. He didn’t deliberately wish to cause harm to me and Xio. There’s no need for me to get so much compensation… Fors remembered Xio’s exhortations. Without looking at her, she said, “It’s only a matter of oversight. There’s no need for compensation. Just refunding me for the intel fee is sufficient.”

Just as she said that, she suddenly thought of something. Since the ancient abandoned castle was a test of the Sanguine, didn't that mean that Xio and herself had been targeted by the Sanguine?

Fors finally couldn't hold back as she turned to glance at Xio. She found Miss Judgment shaking her head slightly, indicating that she hadn't discovered anyone monitoring them.

This… Fors felt puzzled and found it inexplicable.

She then allowed her thoughts to wander as she recalled the situation back then.

We did the exploration only after quite a while. The Sanguine had already lost their patience by then?

The boss of the town's inn knew of the ancient abandoned castle. He was a Sanguine in disguise? That's not right. Many of the locals knew of this matter. However, that place was too far away and there wasn't anything of value left inside. That's why, unless one was out hunting, people usually wouldn't head in that direction…

That's not right. If the ancient abandoned castle were that dangerous, why are the people who use it for shelter from the rain completely fine? They only describe it as creepy and a little scary? Yes, the Sanguine would usually seal off the passage that heads underground. They opened it for the test? This means that there was some form of monitoring…

Uh, because the ancient castle is too dangerous, the monitoring was done outside the forest and not inside? As Xio and I got lost, we circled around the monitors and weren't detected?

Mr. Fool didn't mention anything about it. It's probably not a huge problem… More attention needs to be taken when I return!

As Fors's thoughts raced, Emlyn said after some pondering, "…Okay."

He didn’t insist on additional compensation, because he believed that the best form of compensation was to punish Ernes Boyar instead of giving money.

Then, he waited for Miss Magician to ask about the punishment, hoping that he could take the opportunity to make an inquiry to the other Tarot Club members. He wanted to see if he could get any good suggestions.

As for Fors, upon considering that it was an internal matter for the Sanguine and that although she was a victim, Mr. Moon hadn’t offered a plan for action, she decided not to press further in consideration for his feelings. Instead, she decided to wait for the conclusion to see if it was satisfactory.

The palace that looked like a giant’s residence turned silent as the mood turned odd.

Audrey looked opposite her and glanced to the side. Pursing her lips, she “curiously” asked, “Mr. Moon, how do you plan on punishing that Sanguine?”

Phew… Emlyn silently exhaled as he subconsciously looked at The World.

“He did so because of orders from the higher-ups. I believe that this mistake isn’t something that deserves payment with his life.”

In between the lines, Emlyn was implying that Mr. World didn’t need to intervene in this matter. There was no need to escalate the matter.

Seeing The World having no objections, Emlyn cast his gaze forward.

“I plan on leading that Sanguine to a particular cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother in Backlund.”

Having participated in so many Tarot Gatherings, even if he couldn’t be concerned about certain details, he knew the requirement of hiding matters

regarding himself in the real world. Therefore, he didn't mention the Harvest Church.

The Church of Earth Mother only has one cathedral in all of Backlund. That's the Harvest Church! The rest are all in the outskirts and surroundings villages… Leonard held back his laughter as he looked up at the dome above.

"You wish to have the Beyonders of the Church of Earth Mother purify that Sanguine?" Fors blurted out in surprise.

From her point of view, this was no different from directly killing the person in question!

"Uh…" Emlyn was momentarily at a loss for words.

At that moment, Cattleya interrupted:

"The Church of Earth Mother has the habit of inducting the Sanguine into the church, converting their faith and making them priests or bishops."

I see… With thoughts in mind, Audrey glanced at Mr. Moon without letting him notice it.

Getting that Sanguine to become a member of the clergyman, to pray daily at the cathedral and do voluntary work, so as to cleanse the heart. He would be stuck doing this for a very long period of time… Mr. Moon's plan for punishment is really vicious… However, I like it! That fellow nearly made me and Xio turn into ancient wraiths due to the corruptive powers behind the door… Fors instantly felt her interest piqued as she asked, "Mr. Moon, how do you plan on luring the Sanguine into the cathedral of Earth Mother? Have you worked out a plan? Perhaps I can provide some help. Uh, you have to be careful. You mustn't enter the cathedral of Earth Mother in order to punish him. Th-that way, the only thing you can do is to request Mr. Fool for help."

Of course, that might be something Mr. Fool wishes to happen, allowing "Him" to have someone on the inside of the Church of Earth Mother… After saying that, Fors silently added. Upon hearing that, Leonard nearly laughed out. He was extremely certain that Mr. Moon was the Harvest Church's Emlyn White. Clearly, this Sanguine was already a priest of Earth Mother!

This is slightly akin to a drowning person pulling others in… Leonard held back his laughter, glanced at The World, and he found that his former colleague didn't seem perturbed. He appeared extremely somber.

He couldn't help but think, Is this the power of a Clown, or is it a state that Klein is accustomed to?

At the end of the long mottled table, The Fool Klein nearly covered his mouth.

He never expected Emlyn to be so creative!

This was a little like multi-level marketing, yet it's a little different. After all, it's not necessarily a good thing for Emlyn to know of that… Klein leaned back into his chair as he awaited the development with piqued interest.

He had always kept in mind Miss Justice's advice during his last treatment session about not always wearing a thick mask. He tried his best to do so when opportunities arose so as to maintain a healthy mental state.

Upon hearing Miss Magician's words of concern, Emlyn felt even more awkward because he went to the cathedral of Earth Mother several times a day on a daily basis. He felt uncomfortable even if he skipped the weekends.

He cleared his throat and said, "I temporarily do not have a thought-out plan. I wish to get some suggestions from all of you. Yes, I hope that we do

not have too intense a battle. It's difficult to ensure that the matter doesn't escalate, and I also do not wish for my identity to be directly exposed.

"Miss Magician, there are no problems regarding your participation, but we will absolutely not be meeting each other."

His idea of not directly exposing his identity meant that he didn't mind that Ernes Boyar and the other Sanguine could guess that he did it. It was a way to instill shock and awe in them, but it was best that there wasn't any obvious evidence.

Fors tersely answered as she mimicked the other experienced members of the Tarot Club.

"First, you need to tell us what Sequence that Sanguine is roughly at and what he's good at."

Emlyn was already prepared as he answered, "It's equivalent to Sequence 5. He's quite experienced and is good at creating the effects of the full moon…"

Effects of the full moon? Fors was taken aback as she turned agape but was unable to say a word.

After Emlyn finished the introduction, Fors said with a hollow chuckle, "I recall that I have other matters to tend to. It might not be convenient for me to participate in this matter."

When in a state similar to the full moon, she would hear Mr. Door's ravings!

And this meant that she would instantly be heavily injured by the target, losing all her combat strength! Emlyn frowned slightly, displeased with Miss Magician's sudden change in attitude.

At this moment, Xio, who had been listening silently, said, “I can participate. I just need a portion of the spoils.”

Miss Judgment’s tone is very firm. It’s like she wants to exact vengeance… Emlyn mumbled silently to himself and glanced at Ma’am Hermit and Mr. Hanged Man, only to discover that they temporarily had no intention of speaking. It appeared as though they wished to observe what kind of plan the Backlund members of the Tarot Club could come up with.

As this involved her friends and how it could be the first mission that the Tarot Club members would participate in at the same time, Audrey was rather intrigued. After some observation, she said in deliberation, “I can hypnotize that Sanguine, allowing him to enter the cathedral of Earth Mother himself.

“However, to not expose ourselves and to ensure a high chance of success, it’s best that he’s in a lost or half-dazed state while I hypnotize him. Mr. Moon, can you do that?”

Emlyn was summarizing his powers and items to consider a solution when Leonard suddenly laughed.

“That’s simple, but I’ll only be responsible for making that Sanguine unconscious.

“Of course, the premise is that there’s sufficient intel, and it depends on how we go about taking action.”

Just as he said that, Xio nodded and said, “I’m good at tracking and investigation. You can leave intel matters to me.

“Alright. First, Mr. Moon will have to inform me of that Sanguine’s name, address, and appearance.”

“Alright.” Emlyn heaved a sigh of relief before saying in a somewhat lost manner, “Then what’s my part in all of this? Also, what kind of payment do

you want?”

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CHAPTER 989
MENTOR ALGER

Upon hearing The Moon's question, the rest of the Tarot Club members realized that the main instigator for the punishment had ended up with nothing to do!

According to the established plan, all he needed to do was provide the name, address, and appearance before waiting for the outcome. Miss Judgment was in charge of tracking and investigations to figure out the target's patterns. Miss Justice and Mr. Star would then choose a suitable location based on the feedback before Mr. Star threw the Sanguine into an unconscious state without attracting any attention. Miss Justice would then take this opportunity to complete a hypnotism act and make the target proceed to the predetermined location.

In this entire process, there was nothing for The Moon.

Uh… Audrey deliberated and said, "Mr. Moon, what you need to do is to ensure that the hypnotized Sanguine doesn't encounter any accidents on the way to the cathedral, without him struggling or being rescued…"

Upon saying that, Audrey suddenly realized a problem in the plan as she hurriedly added, "If that Sanguine is extremely resistant towards the Church of Mother Earth, the hypnotic effects wouldn't be as effective. Therefore, I plan on avoiding this point if possible. I will imbue in him the thought of nabbing some target he hates so that he wouldn't realize that he's entering the intended cathedral during the pursuit. Uh, how about letting you be the target of his hatred? This will require you to be able to ensure your own safety while maintaining a distance without being caught." "…It's not a problem," Emlyn answered after some thought

With Duke Olmer removing the mental corruption of the Sequence 5 Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic, Emlyn just needed to wait till a full moon to become a viscount. That would place him equal to Ernes Boyar. And this opportunity was available next week. When that happened, he didn't believe that he would be caught up to by a viscount just like him when he was equipped with the Ancestor's ring

If it really won't work, I can borrow Miss Magician's spellbook. I recall that there are powers in the wind domain… Emlyn was rather confident.

By the side, Leonard felt a baffling sense of horror when he heard the conversation between Miss Justice and Mr. Moon.

To him, no matter how terrifying a head-on battle was, it was nothing compared to the horror of doing something that went against his own will without him realizing it.

He paused for a moment and replied to the second problem that Emlyn had raised.

"My payment is the same as Miss Judgment. I want a portion of the spoils."

To Leonard, this entire matter required him to determine the time and location to pull the target into a dream before he left. He didn't need to care if the operation was successful or if any accidents cropped up. It was as simple as heading to a coffee shop to order a cup of Desi coffee. The only thing that needed him to take into account was to not expose himself. Therefore, he couldn't bring himself to ask for an advanced payment, planning to obtain a cut from the final spoils of war.

In addition, he believed that this was a necessary thing to do in order to fully blend in with the Tarot Club. He didn't need to nitpick on such matters.

Audrey turned her head and glanced at Xio before retracting her gaze. Revealing a smile, she said, "My request is the same as Mr. Star and Miss

Judgment. I'll take a quarter of the spoils of war."

In fact, she wasn't insistent on getting payment, because she believed that the Sanguine had bullied a Tarot Club member and her two friends. Punishing him was something she expected of herself. The reason why she took a portion of the spoils of war was to take into account Mr. Moon's feelings. She was afraid that her voluntary help would leave the prideful Sanguine embarrassed and angry.

Furthermore, Mr. Moon doesn't have any money, so the payment can only be the spoils of war… Audrey added silently.

Although she didn't deliberately keep count, based on her ability to take note of details and the memory of a Spectator, she believed that Mr. Moon, who had spent 5,000 pounds to purchase the Sequence 5 Artificial Vampire Beyonder characteristic, wasn't in the best financial state. Furthermore, he had to refund the intel fee that he earned.

Four participants, with each obtaining a piece of the spoils of war… That's very fair… Emlyn nodded and surveyed the area.

"Any other suggestions?"

Fors asked in disbelief, "It's that simple?

"That's a Sanguine equivalent to a Sequence 5. The plan you came up with sounds like it would succeed very easily…"

In her mind, Sequence 5 Beyonders were the strongest among unaffiliated Beyonders. Some were even the host of gatherings. Even the powerful pirate admirals were of that Sequence, but now, in the conversation of The Star and the others, such a Sequence 5 was to be finished so simply. There didn't seem to be any difficulties!

Upon hearing her question, Leonard thought and said, "As long as that Sanguine doesn't have any items that resist my powers, even if he's

equivalent to a Sequence 5, I'll definitely be able to throw him into an unconscious state for some time. It will just depend on Miss Justice to grasp this opportunity."

"If I arrange the location and make preparations ahead of time, I'll be fine," Audrey replied in a confirmatory tone.

She was actually a little uneasy. After all, this was her first time in battle, but her confidence over her Beyonder powers and knowledge in psychological mysticism allowed her to say those words with confidence.

After Fors heard the response, she suddenly felt her mind a little adrift.

Without realizing it, apart from Mr. World, the rest of the Tarot Club members have the ability to finish off Sequence 5 Beyonders as well…

That's right. Miss Justice is already a Sequence 6 Hypnotist. With the cooperation of a Beyonder of the same level, there really is a relatively high chance of hypnotizing a Sequence 5 Beyonder…

Just as Emlyn felt that this matter had been settled without needing any more questions to be raised, Alger, who had been observing from the side, spoke:

"As members of a secret organization, I believe that everything needs to be considered at a deeper level."

"Ah?" Emlyn and Leonard cast their gaze at Mr. Hanged Man with a puzzled look.

Audrey and Xio were taken aback before they realized something

Alger cleared his throat and looked at Derrick.

"Since Delaire Forest's abandoned ancient castle was a test, why isn't the obvious Sanguine a test as well?"

Exactly… I knew that Mr. Hanged Man would've given a warning… The Fool Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to nod. Cattleya then looked at The Hanged Man with a look of approval and agreement.

This… Emlyn's pupils constricted, at a loss for a retort.

In an instant, he found himself too careless!

Leonard was taken aback. Immediately, he realized that he was too desultory. He had involved himself without fully understanding the details and without consideration of any latent risks.

Of course, this style had to do with his identity as an official Beyonder and its thought processes.

As expected of Mr. Hanged Man. He considers all the details with such meticulousness… Audrey, you need to build up more experience! Audrey focused on something else as she asked, "So we need to abandon the punishment and take action when the Sanguine are unable to maintain the secret surveillance?"

Alger chuckled and said, "There's no need to. Just a few acts of misdirection would do."

He then looked at Emlyn and said, "First, hand the investigation of the Sanguine to bounty hunters in Backlund. Use their existence to hide Miss Judgment's actions. Second, when determining the location, try to do it near an orthodox deity's cathedral. This will effectively disrupt any subsequent divinations. Third, before Miss Justice and the others take action, you have to do something that leaves one suspicious but is nothing eye-catching. Make it seem like you will be exacting revenge somewhere else so as to attract the 'eyeballs' of the secret monitor away; thus, creating the desired opportunity. This is combined with the first point. Fourth, only after the Sanguine is successfully hypnotized do you become the bait."

Having said that, Alger paused.

“If there’s the addition of anti-divination and anti-prophecy at the demigod level, this entire matter will be flawless.

“Of course, Miss Justice, Mr. Star, you must be disguised during the operation, without leaving behind any traces.”

This speech left most of the members taken aback, especially Derrick. He couldn’t help show his respect and amazement.

Although he had no means of participating in this punishment operation, as a member of the Tarot Club, he couldn’t help but be concerned and pensive about such matters that required a clear line of thought. He hadn’t noticed any problems with the original plan of Mr. Moon and company, so now, he couldn’t help but be impressed by Mr. Hanged Man’s ability in such matters!

Emlyn thought and said, “You mean that I should use a superficial form of punishment to hide Miss Justice’s and Mr. Star’s secret operation? “It’s like… It’s like I would make it appear that I’ll take action in a particular corner of a square after the target leaves a coffee shop, attracting all the attention, but in actual fact, Miss Justice and company would have already completed the hypnosis inside the coffee shop without anyone realizing it?”

Alger nodded gently.

“That’s right.”

I learned something new! Mr. Hanged Man really is an experienced Beyonder! Audrey felt overjoyed receiving an epiphany.

“The problem now is where are we to find an item or charm with anti-divination and anti-prophecy effects at the demigod level?” Leonard also felt that he had enriched himself greatly as he asked.

He wasn’t too worried about himself since he had an angel grandpa in him.

Fors made an utterance before saying, “I can lend out Leymano’s Travels. On it there’s Angel’s Embrace. I can also take one portion of the spoils of

war.”

As she said that, she secretly glanced at The World Gehrman Sparrow, heaving a sigh of relief when he saw the gentleman silent.

Unbeknownst to her, The Fool Klein had a very simple thought: Angel’s Embrace… That sounds so much better than Paper Angel…

With the punishment operation finally confirmed, Audrey didn’t hesitate as she surveyed the area.

“I met the Psychology Alchemists’s councilor, Hvin Rambis, last week.”

What? Hvin Rambis is a councilor of the Psychology Alchemists? Leonard sat up in surprise. He had the urge to immediately report it to the archbishop and gather a team to arrest him.

It was an occupation hazard.

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CHAPTER 990
INNER FEARS

Almost instinctively, Leonard looked around the table and realized that none of the other Tarot Club members showed any hint of surprise. Instead, they were listening attentively.

They knew of it long ago? That's right. This is only my second gathering. I haven't had the chance to learn about many things… The secrets that get exchanged here sure are plentiful… Leonard retracted his gaze and returned to his original sitting posture.

After a slight pause, Audrey glanced at Xio, who sat two seats away from her, before casting her gaze at Mr. Hanged Man. She continued, "He attempted to cue me to interact with different nobles and understand their true attitude over different matters. I would then inform him of them. Thankfully, Mr. Fool had provided me with the blessings of an angel. So I wasn't influenced in any way. Uh, what should I do next?"

You can even get blessings from an angel? Leonard looked around in surprise once more, only to see no reaction from the other members of the Tarot Club.

Obviously, he wasn't surprised that Mr. Fool had a few angels in existence under "Him." After all, the name and title corresponding to Death Consul was one that he had heard numerous times.

He was just surprised that the Tarot Club members were able to pray for assistance at that level. He viewed this secret organization in a new light, finding it more impressive.

Meanwhile, Xio keenly caught onto a few keywords:

Noble… Psychology Alchemists…

Combining it with the blonde hair, emerald-green eyes of Miss Justice's blurry figure, she began to connect it to a particular friend: Audrey Hall!

However, she couldn't be sure because blonde hair, black hair, blue eyes, and green eyes were common among the Loen nobles. People just had different combinations. Besides, no one knew how many members the Psychology Alchemists had developed in the noble circles. Therefore, Xio couldn't directly point it at Miss Audrey from the traits she noticed.

As she tried to do a deeper level of observation, Alger had said, "There's no need to pay too much attention to this. The various orthodox Churches will provide protective measures to their believers with a rather important status. They will prevent them from being assassinated or hypnotized. This comes from experience that has been built up over a thousand years of history. It wouldn't be that easily overcome. From another angle, if the Psychology Alchemists really can control the nobles that simply by hypnotizing them, the ones ruling the country wouldn't be the royal family and the three Churches. Clearly, reality is in conflict with that.

"Yes, just as you said, Hvin Rambis only gave you a cue to observe the true attitudes of the different nobles on different matters. This means that he's holding himself back greatly, afraid of doing anything too overboard. It's to prevent himself from leaving behind any clues. In addition, your true status among the nobles should just be in the periphery. You have no way of directly involving yourself in various political matters. Therefore, in contrast, the protection and monitoring over you wouldn't be too strict. This is also why Hvin Rambis targeted you."

Mr. Hanged Man's analysis is really detailed… Although he often taught Little Sun and the others, he would secretly gain something during the process, wishing that he could get more useful information from the feedback. However, there's none of that this time. Hmm, it's the same for

the suggestions for the punishment operation from before as well… On careful thought, his change has been happening for quite some time. It just wasn't too obvious in the past. I even missed out on it… Audrey's professionalism stirred up as she quickly did a mental analysis of The Hanged Man.

She quickly had a theory, suspecting that Mr. Hanged Man was trying to transform his standing within the Tarot Club!

Ever since Ma'am Hermit joined the Tarot Club and showcased her resources and channels at sea, Mr. Hanged Man has been unknowingly been searching to transform himself in a bid to distinguish himself from her… Before problems cropped up with the Artisan, this transformation wasn't that obvious. Even Mr. Hanged Man didn't realize it himself. It was only recently that he seemed to finally come to a realization and thought it to be true… Indeed, to maintain one's standing in the Tarot Club, the raising of one's strength is one aspect, but providing help to the entire group is another aspect… Audrey's mind raced as she turned her attention back to the topic at hand.

She pondered for a moment and subconsciously, her tone turned heavy.

"Does this also mean that the orthodox Churches will have certain levels of surveillance, control, and guidance for the important nobles?"

This was something that she had thought about while in the Loen Charity Bursary Foundation's office.

She had subconsciously drawn a scene that represented her concerns on this matter!

In psychology, elements she drew out in such a state often didn't point to something particular. It was more like an abstract expression. The "cold eyes" mostly represented her fear for people monitoring and controlling her and her family.

Combining it with her subconscious drawing, her worry of Hvin Rambis's cueing, and the celebrant of the Mass at the Church of Evernight her parents attended being Backlund's archbishop, Audrey's interpretation was that not only was she afraid of the hypnosis and cues of the Psychology Alchemists, but she had also become fearful of the othordox Churches. She couldn't be sure if they would directly use their Beyonder powers to imbue thoughts into aristocratic believers with high standings, so as to guide them into doing actions that violated their true will.

This was sacrilegious and rebellious to Audrey, who had received an orthodox education from a young age. Therefore, she had tensed up back then, immediately burning that drawing.

After hearing Miss Justice's question, Alger scoffed.

"Isn't that very normal? When living in human society, one has to accept a certain level of surveillance, control, and guidance.

"I know what you're afraid of, but think about it. Compare someone using their power conferred from their standing, using money and weapons to control and guide others, to using Beyonder powers to do something similar. In essence, is there any difference?

"The difference is that one knows that they don't wish to do it but ends up having to do it; the other is that they do not even have the thoughts of being unwilling to do it."

Audrey nodded and said, "Yes, this means the loss of freedom of one's mind and thoughts. It's the most terrifying."

Alger chuckled once more.

"How can there be a completely free mind and thoughts? By choosing your faith and beliefs, you're naturally bound by your faith and beliefs. Yes, let's focus only on the Loen Kingdom. The three Churches are equal, and together with the royal family, this creates a balance between each other. If

the Church of Storms goes overboard towards its believers, that believer can easily convert their faith to the Church of Evernight. Therefore, under most situations, the orthodox Churches will tend to use their standing and beliefs as a religion to guide important believers instead of using Beyonder powers."

Balance… Audrey pondered over this term. She came to a new realization of the kingdom's upper circles and the entire world. This was something she had come into contact with before but had never deeply understood the word.

At this moment, many of her thoughts matured.

"Thank you for your explanation, Mr. Hanged Man." Audrey sincerely addressed him with an honorary title. "Then, how should I deal with Hvin Rambis?"

Alger calmly said, "The problem with him isn't anything to panic about. You fully have the ability to run circles around him. You can provide him unimportant information while keeping the core secrets to heart. You can seek this opportunity to obtain potion formulas and even their Beyonder ingredients.

"After some time, when there are corresponding changes, you can consider switching strategies. Of course, you can't be too careless. Duke Negan is an example of this mistake."

Just as he said that, sitting at the bottom of the long mottled table, The World Gehrman Sparrow glanced at Miss Justice. He said with a hoarse smile, "When the time comes, even if Hvin Rambis were to die, no one will suspect you."

Even if Hvin Rambis were to die… die… He's a demigod… Mr. World has plans of attacking Hvin Rambis? Uh, it's possible. He has always been investigating Cuarón's suicide case. He was even the one who informed me

of Hvin Rambis's true identity… Audrey's eyes widened slightly as she felt perturbed.

Even when she hated and felt the most fear towards Hvin Rambis, she had never had thoughts of killing this Psychology Alchemists councilor. All she considered was the means to avoid being guided. On the one hand, it was because she didn't have such thoughts, and on the other hand, it was because he was a demigod.

This meant the top-ranking power in the kingdom and Churches!

"I understand what needs to be done. Thank you, all of you." Audrey drew a breath and politely thanked them.

…Klein sure sounds bombastic these days. Yes, he even wishes to get rid of Amon's avatars in Backlund. Hvin Rambis is really nothing… Leonard looked at The World Gehrman Sparrow with mixed feelings.

Cattleya and company also remained silent.

With the topic of the Psychology Alchemists coming to an end, Klein controlled The World Gehrman Sparrow to make him look towards himself.

"Honorable Mr. Fool, I wish to communicate privately with Mr. Star."

Klein temporarily didn't wish to let the other members of the Tarot Club learn about the eradication of Amon's avatars. It wouldn't be good for keeping the matter confidential, and it might lead them to be targeted by Amon.

"Sure." The Fool Klein naturally didn't deny his own request.

As Leonard was feeling poignant at the possibility of private communication, he informed Klein of the main points in Pallez Zoroast's reply. It also included the problem of the Worm of Time Beyonder characteristics loss.

This made Klein suddenly realize how he could use his Worms of Spirit to create charms and bullets.

Split off a few and kill them. When the characteristic contained in them return to my body, the remaining material can also be used like a Worm of Time!

The only problem is that killing Worms of Spirit deals a certain level of damage to myself. After all, each Worm of Spirit contains a part of my Spirit Body. Yes, I have to limit the number each time. Only after I fully recover can I do it again… In thought, Klein got The World Gehrman Sparrow to reply, “I will try my best to confirm if a blessing of Concealment is possible before I give you an answer.

“If there’s no problem, we can attempt to seek out Sealed Artifacts of the Marauder pathway at the demigod level. Of course, I will try to think of the means to identify the grafting of fate.”

Klein wasn’t sure if “observation” from above the gray fog would allow him to see the truth of fate, just like how he was able to see his believers being parasitized. Hence, he planned on using the Paper crane to contact Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin and gain his expert opinion.

“Alright.” As Leonard grumbled about how Old Man would’ve recovered further if demigod-level Sealed Artifacts at the Marauder pathway were that easy to find, he nodded slightly in response.

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CHAPTER 991
A RITUAL WITHOUT A "REPLY"

After ending the private communication, Klein made The World Gehrman Sparrow look at Cattleya.

"Please inform Queen Mystic that I wish to meet her to talk about something. The exact time and location is up to her."

Queen Mystic? So Ma'am Hermit represents the royals above the Five Seas… Leonard was first taken aback before he came to a realization.

What's the matter? Cattleya frowned slightly in a wary manner.

"I will forward her your intentions, but I cannot provide any guarantees over her agreement."

"Okay." The World Gehrman Sparrow nodded simply, indicating that it was fine.

At this moment, Derrick finally had an opportunity as he asked, "Everyone…"

He glanced at Mr. Hanged Man and Mr. World before continuing, "The ritual needed for me to advance to Priest of Light requires pure darkness. I need to bury my entire body in ice that usually doesn't melt. In the City of Silver, such ice isn't difficult to find. However, how do we create pure but safe darkness?"

So that’s the Priest of Light’s advancement ritual. Little Sun sure is honest and simple… Due to her lack of experience and knowledge, Audrey was unable to provide any substantial suggestions. All she could do was cast her eyes at the person she believed was capable of resolving the problem: The World Mr. Gehrman Sparrow.

And at this moment, The World raised his hands to pinch his temples. As for The Fool Klein, he was rapidly trying to think of a solution.

Sigh, if this were the outside world, pure darkness is extremely easy to obtain. Ice that normally doesn’t melt would be the most troublesome thing to obtain, but the City of Silver is the complete opposite… There, darkness is too dangerous. Just being within it will result in one’s disappearance or suffering the attacks of strange monsters…

I can get Leonard to provide charms from the Evernight domain, and then I can stir some of the powers of the mysterious space above the gray fog. Using Little Sun’s prayers, I can provide an area of artificial darkness. But the problem lies in me being unable to determine if this would bring the normal danger that the City of Silver encounters. This is not something that can be answered with divination. When matters do not involve myself, I can only determine if a matter is dangerous or not, or when matters should be done. And under such situations, there are too many elements involved, and the sources of danger are diverse…

Yes, I’ll summon Arrodes later and ask it…

Klein had previously been considering the problem over Little Sun’s advancement, but he had never been able to find an answer.

Seeing The World silent, Leonard, who had originally wanted to say that “creating pure darkness is extremely easy” slowly shut his mouth. He began pondering over The Sun’s words and caught notice of a word that he had ignored: Safe!

In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, in the City of Silver, darkness is equivalent to danger? Leonard roughly grasped the key idea, but due to his lack of understanding, he was unable to provide any suggestions.

Finally, it was Alger who spoke.

He glanced at Derrick and said, “I will help you gather information and seek out solutions. But in the process, you might need to provide some help to confirm that it can be done.”

“No problem!” Derrick answered without any hesitation.

Right on the heels of that, he added, “There’s no need to rush it. I still have about a month before I can finish digesting my Notary potion.”

Alger nodded gently, indicating that this wasn’t something that needed any reminders.

At this moment, Cattleya deliberated for a moment and said to Derrick, “Perhaps we can consider this problem from another angle. Your advancement ritual wouldn’t last too long. We can simply increase the time you can survive in pure darkness to resolve this matter.

“I remember that you’ve mentioned that after being left in darkness with zero light, there are two dangers. The first would be the attacks from strange monsters that come from unknown origins, and the second would be a baffling instance of disappearance that is akin to evaporating.

“The former situation is easy to resolve. You can make a request to your Chief for certain Sealed Artifacts, or you can get him to stand guard by your side. As for the second case, I don’t know enough. You can attempt to ask your Chief.”

Derrick thought about it carefully and suddenly felt that this was a viable train of thought with a rather significant chance of success.

He immediately replied in pleasant surprise, “Thank you, Ma’am Hermit.”

The exchange and learning session continued until the gathering slowly came to an end. Seeing that it was almost done, The Fool Klein rapped gently on the table’s corner.

“Let’s end it here for today.”

“Your wish is our will!” Audrey and company stood up and bowed reverently.

After they vanished from above the gray fog, Klein left the area and returned to the real world.

He first took out his wallet and got the paper crane which was folded by Will Auceptin. Spreading it across the table, he picked up a pencil and simply wrote: “There’s something!”

After folding the paper crane and stuffing it under his pillow, Klein got into bed and genuinely took an afternoon nap.

In his hazy dream, he once again saw the pitch-black plains and the towering steeple.

Passing through the plains and through the wooden doors, Klein arrived at the familiar corner.

A black pram came out of the thick shadows as Will Auceptin, wrapped in silver silk, sucked at his right thumb and derided angrily, “You are getting more and more impolite!”

Klein laughed dryly and said, “With our relationship, there’s no need for such pleasantries, right?”

Will Auceptin harrumphed and said, “Speak, what’s the matter?”

“This is the thing; I recently encountered Amon’s avatar,” Klein said directly.

The baby’s mouth widened a little as though he was about to cry. It took him great effort to control himself as he said, “I haven’t been born for more than a month!”

“…There’s nothing I need from you. I only wish to ask you a question,” Klein quickly added.

Will Auceptin raised his fleshy arm and waved it.

“What is it?”

Klein immediately said with a smile, “Amon’s avatar can steal the destiny of others and appear while replacing their identities. I wish to know how I can see through such a terrifying matter.”

Will Auceptin chuckled as he pointed up at the sky with his index finger.

“Pray for help.”

From the looks of it, using the powers of the gray fog can be used to discover the grafting of destiny… Klein heaved a sigh of relief as he felt even more certain.

When he thought of the word “using,” he was referring to using his marionette to pray to The Fool while he entered above the gray fog. Through the point of light representing his believer, he could survey the surrounding area to seek out any abnormalities. In a sense, this was equivalent to The Fool’s observation, an equivalent to an augmented “true vision.”

But the problem is that I can’t stay above the gray fog to observe for grafting all the time. It might be the case that, in between two of the

observation periods, Amon could've entered Böklund Street and have done something… Klein thought before asking with some deliberation:

"Anything you would like to remind me of?"

Will Auceptin turned his head away without looking at him as he mumbled, "You have to visit me and my parents once this week. During high tea…"

"No problem!" Klein agreed without any hesitation.

Only then did the baby turn his head back and giggle.

"Next week, around Wednesday or Thursday, there might be some changes in your destiny."

Is that so… Klein nodded in thought as he watched the black pram slowly retreat into the shadows.

After waking up from his dream, he packed up his items and began setting up an altar without any rest.

This time, the target of his prayer was the Evernight Goddess "Herself," and not Artificial Death. This was to prevent Amon from prying upon the source of the stirring via the changes in destiny and, thus, noticing something wrong.

How could the Evernight's Blessed be praying to Artificial Death?

After setting up the ritual, Klein wiped his face and turned into the cold-looking Gehrman Sparrow, causing his height to drop a little lower.

After igniting the first two candles in front, Klein made the ordinary candle representing "himself" burn with a yellow flame. There were two candles in front. One was a candle made of night vanilla and slumber flower to represent Evernight, and the other was a candle made up of white chestnut flowers and wild rose to represent "Concealment."

Following that, he created a wall of spirituality, dripped Full Moon Essential Oil, and burned some herbal powder that pleased the goddess. Bit by bit, he completed the ritual.

Towards the end, Klein took two steps back, activated his Spirit Vision, and chanted softly, “I pray for the power of the dark night.

“I pray for the power of the mystery.

“I pray for the Goddess’s loving grace.

“…I encountered Blasphemer Amon’s avatar in Backlund. He was gathering the characteristics of a Marauder pathway demigod…

“…I seek for the blessings of Concealment so as to complete the mission of eradicating the Blasphemer’s avatars…

“Night vanilla, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please pass my supplication to the Goddess! “Moon flower, a herb that belongs to the red moon, please pass my supplication to the Goddess!”

After he was done chanting, Klein patiently waited for a while, but nothing happened. There wasn’t any reply.

This… The Goddess is in a critical period of gaining control over the Death pathway’s Uniqueness and is unable to respond beyond anything normal? Should I try to pray to Artificial Death? After all, if there are the blessings of Concealment, Amon wouldn’t be able to see it. If it doesn’t, then the source of stirring destiny wouldn’t point to me… Klein frowned little by little as he ended the ritual and cleared the altar.

He felt that he needed to find other solutions.

After he finished clearing the desk and turned around, prepared to head for the reclining chair, a figure suddenly appeared in front of him!

The figure wore a simple linen robe with signs of patching. By the figure's waist was a belt made of tree bark. Raven-black hair cascaded down freely as the figure's feet didn't wear any socks or shoes, making them covered in dust and wounds.

It was a lady. She had extremely normal facial features. Her ghostly black eyes were no different from the common person, but just looking at her left Klein feeling a sense of extreme peace and serenity. Even though feelings of alarm rose up within him, they were unable to overpower the peacefulness.

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CHAPTER 992
ARRODES'S CONGRATULATIONS

"You are?" Klein asked in a rather complicated state of calmness.

The lady in a simple robe nodded and said, "Arianna, Servant of Concealment."

Servant of Concealment… Arianna… Klein's eyes constricted, as he knew who the lady was.

As a former Nighthawk, how could he not be aware of the name "Arianna"?

She was the Evernight Cloister's matron, head of the thirteen archbishops, a likely candidate for the future Pope. Regardless of which identity she had, she was part of the general knowledge that couldn't be avoided in religious studies and mysticism!

As for the name, Servant of Concealment, Klein had read about it in Emperor Roselle's diary. Considering the similar name of Attendant of Mysteries, he suspected that this pointed to an angel. Meanwhile, based on the Law of Beyonder Characteristics Conservation, with a Sequence o in existence, it meant that Attendant of Mysteries couldn't be a Sequence 1 angel. Therefore, Klein believed that the Servant of Concealment was likely Sequence 2 of the Evernight pathway.

This… It isn't that the Goddess didn't reply, but that she used a very special way to respond…"She" directly sent her servant over… Klein felt mixed emotions that could hardly be described.

He fell silent for a few seconds before giving a solemn bow.

“Good afternoon, Your Eminence.”

In the various Churches, if a demigod at the angel level walked the land, there was a need to address them as “Your Eminence” as a show of respect. Likewise, towards the pontiff, pope, and chief shepherd-representatives of the deities-one had to use “Your Holiness.” In addition, a Church’s head was synonymous with the Holy See or Apostolic See. Of course, many a time, the Holy See could also represent the Church’s headquarters itself.

Arianna tapped her chest four times in a clockwise fashion and replied in a pious manner, “May the Goddess bless you.”

She then said, “I’m an ascetic. You can just call me Ma’am.”

“Yes, Ma’am Arianna.” Klein didn’t insist.

Arianna looked at him calmly for two seconds and directly asked, “You plan to deal with Blasphemer Amon’s avatars in Backlund?”

“Yes, I wish to obtain the blessings of Concealment,” Klein frankly replied.

At this moment, he felt a little stumped because this was different from what he expected.

He originally expected the Goddess to answer by blessing him. Then, he and Pallez Zoroast could join forces to wipe out all of Amon’s avatars in Backlund. During this process, it wouldn’t expose Leonard or the Marauder pathway angel. But now, with the blessings becoming something corporeal that would be involved in the battle, Pallez Zoroast would be immediately be discovered once “He” took action. When that happened, it was hard to predict what would ensue!

Don’t tell me I don’t need to ally with Pallez Zoroast? I’ll only get “Him” to provide intel and then split some of the spoils of war? Klein’s thoughts

rapidly ran through his mind as Arianna spoke unhurriedly:

“I can provide the power of Concealment to shield everything that happens from the prying of fate. However, I cannot guarantee that I can eliminate all of Amon’s avatars in Backlund.”

Pallez Zoroast said that “He” has the means of doing so… The person who understands Amon the best is indeed a Sequence 1 of the same pathway… Klein thought and said, “Ma’am Arianna, I have already come up with a well-thought-out plan. All you need is to provide the power of Concealment. You do not need to be involved in the actual battle. Leave the rest to me.”

Arianna nodded and raised her right arm as she spread her palm.

Points of light lit up, profound and resplendent as they quickly outlined an emblem in her palm.

This emblem was completely crystallized, as though it was made of obsidian. It made one realize its existence when looking at it, but it appeared to vanish when not looking at it.

“This is my Evernight coat of arms. It doesn’t possess any characteristics or power by itself. The only use is that, when triggered, it will establish a connection with me, regardless of where you are in the real world,” Arianna explained simply. “Before you begin your operation, remember to use it. I will provide you with the power of Concealment. If you need more direct assistance, use ancient Hermes to chant ‘Arianna’ when triggering it.” This is equivalent to an itemized altar and ritual that points to her… Oh, at the level of angel, the range of responding to prayers has extended to the entire world? Klein instantly grasped the true nature of the Evernight coat of arms.

As a Bizarro Sorcerer, he did not have the means to reply to prayers. This was a trait that could be obtained only at Sequence 3. Of course, as Sea God and The Fool, he was very well-versed in such matters.

Klein didn’t stand on ceremony as he accepted it and bowed sincerely.

“Thank you.”

After saying that, he tapped four spots in a clockwise manner on his chest, forming the sign of the crimson moon.

“Praise the Lady!”

This way, he could still join forces with Pallez Zoroast. As long as he triggered the Evernight coat of arms without using ancient Hermes to chant Arianna’s name, everything would be fine.

“Praise the Lady,” Arianna replied piously.

Her figure then vanished as though she had been erased by an eraser.

This is a departure by entering a concealed state? Klein pursed his lips in thought.

Meanwhile, he was filled with suspicion over Arianna’s swift arrival. After all, the Evernight pathway wasn’t well-versed in methods such as teleport. To go from Winter County all the way to Backlund required a significant amount of time.

My ritual isn’t the kind that prays for a direct descent… Could it be that Ma’am Arianna happened to be in the vicinity, in the Backlund diocese? Isn’t that too much a coincidence? If it isn’t one, it only serves to exacerbate the problem. What is “She” doing in Backlund? The undercurrents are stirring… Klein retracted his gaze and patiently waited a while before turning back into Dwayne Dantès.

He found a pen and some paper once again and drew the symbol that was a mixture of concealment and mystery prying.

When the final stroke was written, the full-body mirror in the master bedroom produced a dark but pure light, as though a silent undercurrent was surging out from the bottom of a lake.

Right on the heels of that, fireworks appeared, bursting in the sky.

Colors of gold, silver, red, and blue exploded as words formed in the mirror:

“Welcome back, Great Master!

“Your humble servant, Arrodes, has witnessed the retrieval of a portion of your authority. I’m thrilled that you are gradually recovering your aura. You will eventually return to your supreme position and make the entire world turn silent under your watch!”

This is really… passionate… There’s always something new… Klein nodded in silence.

Amidst the fireworks, those words dissipated and formed into a new sentence:

“Great Master, what instructions do you have for me?”

“I have a question,” Klein said calmly. “In a place where being in darkness can result in danger, how should one create a safe but pure darkness? There are two kinds of dangers involved. One, it will make a person directly vanish in the darkness, and two, it will cause strange monsters to appear and attack.”

The fireworks in the full-body mirror calmed down as aqueous light rippled. Silver words surfaced one after another:

“Great Master, are you referring to the Forsaken Land of the Gods?”

This magic mirror actually knows quite a lot. He also gave me a free question in passing… Klein nodded and said, “That’s right.”

Without any breaks in between, Arrodes’s full-body mirror produced new lines of Loenese text:

“The formation of the Forsaken Land of the Gods is related to the second Creator’s fall. The danger of night there stems from the transformation of two essential powers.

“First, it’s the remnants of the Evernight Goddess’s divine powers. Second, it’s the influence left behind by the Creator. “He” wielded partial authority over shadows, darkness, fallen, corruption, and mutation. The former makes creatures vanish into thin air, while the latter produced monsters in the darkness.

So the two types of dangers stem from different powers. It’s no wonder that there’s such huge differences… Arrodes called the ancient sun god the second Creator… This is very close to my theory… Amon’s and Adam’s father isn’t the reawakening of the original Creator, but a transmigrator who inherited a huge “inheritance”? Klein asked in thought, “In that case, the Evernight Goddess was involved in the fall of the second Creator?”

This was something Klein had vaguely expected. This was from the trait of humans evaporating in the darkness of the Forsaken Land of the Gods. It was very similar to the strange disappearances if one didn’t sleep at night in the ruins of the battle of the gods. And based on Little Sun’s description, King of Demonic Wolves, Flegrea, who wielded control over the Evernight and Concealment authorities, had long perished in the Second Epoch. It was impossible that “He” had done it.

Therefore, unless there was another deity of the Evernight pathway born in the middle, it was difficult for the two abnormalities to not have the Evernight Goddess involved.

On the surface of the mirror, the silver light rapidly converged forming a short sentence:

“That’s right.”

That’s right… Klein was just about to press on when he immediately shut up. He had just recalled one of his identities—Blessed of the Evernight. Therefore, even without anyone watching him, he had to show respect to the deity and not seek out relevant secrets. Of course, time in the mysterious space above the gray fog was excluded.

He was just about to focus on the main question from before to urge Arrodes to list out solutions when he saw the silver words in the full-body mirror change:

“Great Master, your loyal servant, Arrodes, wishes a small favor from you. C-can we not discuss matters regarding the Evernight Goddess?”

At the end of the question, a simple stick figure was drawn.

Just as I wished… Klein deliberately pondered for two seconds and said, “Okay.”

The silver swirls on the surface of the mirror immediately turned brisk as words began taking form:

“As for the question you asked, there are two solutions:

“One is to accept the corruption and let oneself transform into monsters of the darkness. The reason why these creatures do not vanish into thin air during the night is because they have received the protection of the ‘Fallen’ authority. This way, all the darkness is equivalent to safety.

“The second is to create a darkness that comes with the dream world. This will allow the Spirit Body to receive the protection of the dream; thus, slowing down the encroachment of danger at night.”

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CHAPTER 993
ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

Allowing the Spirit Body to receive protection of a dream to slow down the encroachment of danger at night… This is similar to the necessity to sleep when night fell in the ruins of the battlefield of the gods…

Also, the powers in the Forsaken Land of the Gods likely isn't under the Goddess's control. Once one vanishes in the darkness over there, they definitely won't enter the foggy town… Where will it point towards? Or would they stay in the same spot, unable to interact with companions and the real world until they die of starvation or old age… After reading Arrodes's reply, Klein was somewhat enlightened as he roughly grasped the crux of the issue.

However, he felt that this wasn't necessarily useful, because The Sun only required pure darkness so that he could be buried in ice that normally wouldn't melt to consume the Priest of Light potion. Once he entered a dream, there was no way for him to control his own body to complete that critical step. That way, even if he could remain in the darkness for prolonged periods of time, it would be meaningless.

Yes, I'll wait until Little Sun asks the chief of the City of Silver before coming up with an actual plan based on his answer… Of course, before that, I can try to get a corresponding solution from Leonard to figure out how to create darkness with a temporary dreamworld… Klein nodded slightly, acknowledging the answer provided by the magic mirror.

As for the first option of accepting corruption and turning into a monster in the darkness, it wasn't even considered. In the extraordinary world, this was equivalent to committing suicide which almost couldn't be reversed.

Upon considering how he still had one question left to ask, Klein deliberated and asked, “Where can I obtain the potion formula of the Seer pathway’s Sequence 3, Scholar of Yore?”

The full-body mirror’s surface had aqueous light ripple once again as it reflected a dark cathedral without any natural light.

Klein found this scene very familiar as he immediately recalled what it represented—this was where Zaratul, who had turned into a monster, hid!

However, this time, deep inside the cathedral, the cluster of blurry and huge maggots were no longer present.

Just as Klein’s pupils dilated, the silver words appeared beneath the scene depiction:

“Great Master, Zaratul has vanished!

“I can’t find ‘Him’!”

Vanished… Klein momentarily forgot to breathe.

Although he had long known of Zaratul’s return, since he was the one who began the chain reaction by opening the door to the foggy town, he never expected this big shot to secretly leave the cathedral; “His” whereabouts becoming unknown!

Even Arrodes is unable to locate “Him”…What is “He” plotting? The more Klein thought, the more a chill ran down his back.

Having become a Sequence 4 demigod, he could confirm one thing:

His control over the mysterious world above the gray fog was still insufficient. He could temporarily only converge the leaking specialness that it had augmented him with in the real world, making it difficult for Beyonders of corresponding pathways to see it, but it was unable to repress

the law of Beyonder characteristic convergence. As for the gray fog, it had proven time and time again that he had an invisible form of attraction towards Beyonders of the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathway. Amongst them, the effects on the Seer pathway was most evident!

Besides, I myself am quite an attractive Sequence 4 Bizarro Sorceror. It's not impossible for Zaratul to suddenly come to Backlund one day… Klein maintained a deadpan expression and said to the full-body mirror that was switching scenes, "Got it."

Antigonus presented another scene which Klein was equally familiar with. It was the Antigonus family's "treasure trove" at the peak of the Hornacis mountain range.

Below this scene, silver words quickly surfaced once again:

"Great Master, there's another possibility, but I can't tell. I just know that it's easier than the first two."

The Antigonus family's notebook isn't there this time? That's right. It will lead the wielder to the main peak of the Hornacis mountain range to seek out the Antigonus family's treasure trove. It's basically the same as the previous option… What's the possibility that even Arrodes can't tell? Based on what I know about the factions in control of the Seer pathway, it's implying that I should pray to the Goddess for it? The Goddess is the Mother of Concealment, so "She" can choose whether Arrodes can see it or not… Klein's thoughts scattered and quickly made a connection.

Of course, he didn't believe that directly praying for the Scholar of Yore potion formula would allow him to get it. It was too ridiculous, as though it was child's play.

From his experience as a Nighthawk, he suspected that he might need to make enough contributions before he could obtain the Scholar of Yore potion formula from the Evernight Goddess via a ritual.

Making enough contributions… This sure is a familiar phrase… Klein sighed as he began having some ideas.

Clearly, he had hints on how to do so-handle the Artificial Death faction of the Numinous Episcopate!

However, Klein suspected that the Goddess only had up to the Scholar of Yore Sequence for the Seer pathway potion formulas, and not the subsequent ones at the angel level. This was because the Antigonus family's angel didn't perish immediately back then but had hidden in a secret palace, losing control to become a monster and was in a half-sealed state. In addition, The Fool card was also there and hadn't been retrieved yet.

At this moment, Klein had the intention of asking about Amon's avatars, but he suddenly recalled that within the memories of the rat demigod, the warning about the Marauder pathway angel and Amon had been given by this very mirror!

As his thoughts flashed through his mind, Klein narrowed his eyes, looked at the full-body mirror, and nodded.

"Alright, that's it for today. Head back. If there's anything in the future, I'll summon you again."

"Yes, Master! Goodbye, Master~ Your loyal and humble servant, Arrodes, is constantly waiting to return to your side!" Light gathered on the mirror's surface, depicting a stick figure waving its hand.

After everything returned to normal, Klein turned around and picked up the paper with the previously drawn symbol. With a snap of his fingers, he made it burst into scarlet flames.

The ash floated down as he spread open his left hand. In it were two maggots shimmering with solid mysterious symbols.

The two maggots squirmed gently, using their lifeforce to fill the entire bedroom with madness and bizarreness. The surrounding lights then dimmed and brightened from time to time in a non-uniform fashion. They were none other than the Worms of Spirit which Klein had separated from himself.

Suddenly, Klein reached out his right palm, suddenly pressing them towards the two transparent maggots.

Instantly, his palm paused, just short of touching the Worms of Spirit. He raised his palm again, lowering it only to pause. He repeated this several times until he finally exerted his strength with a deadpan expression.

Amidst an invisible and illusory cracking sound, his head suddenly felt a stabbing pain.

This made his soul feel like it was being ripped apart. It was even more painful than encountering a gunshot or a slash wound.

Klein used his Clown powers to control the twitching of his facial muscles. After a few seconds, he raised his right hand to rub his temples, inwardly mumbling, Indeed, the death of every Worm of Spirit deals damage to the Spirit Body. My current limit is six. Hmm, I'll temporarily stop trying. Let's see how long it takes to recover.

Thankfully, this is a tolerable matter. Otherwise, it would be dangerous if a marionette is destroyed while the Worm of Spirit isn't able to be collected in time due to an intense battle…

Yes, it's different from Amon's Worms of Time avatars. A Bizarro Sorcerer's Worms of Spirit will not necessarily die when a marionette is destroyed. Most of the time, a Bizarro Sorcerer is able to retrieve them in time. It's because the distance between the body and the marionette isn't that exaggerated…

After confirming the situation, and waiting for the Beyonder characteristics contained within the Worms of Spirit to return to himself, Klein rummaged for some materials and set up a ritual to pray to The Fool.

After a series of tasks, Klein used the carcasses of two Worms of Spirit, two silver plates, and the complicated symbol which he had previously recorded down to make two silver-black bullets-of which the latter came from Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin.

The two bullets were carved with strange, indescribable patterns. They kept extending inwards as though they were coming together in the middle at one point. Their entire bodies were gloomy but not dark. Just one look at it made one's thoughts sluggish.

Klein flicked a gold coin and used divination, together with his spiritual intuition, to swiftly determine the abilities of the two bullets—the target would immediately enter a state of paralysis upon being hit!

The length of time that one was left in this state depended on the potency of one's Spirit Body. Even Sequence 3 saints would be in a state of stiffness for a second or two!

This already exceeds my powers. Of course, the premise is that contact can be made. Oh, this is a result of the gray fog's augmentation… These two bullets should be at the same level as the Fate Siphon charms. Although my Worms of Spirit can't be compared to Amon's and Pallez's Worms of Time, the amount of power I can now draw from the mysterious space above the gray fog is clearly superior to what I could do in the past… I shall call them, uh-Control Spirit Bullets… Klein drew Death Knell from his underarm holster, snapped open the cylinder wheel, and stuffed the two silver-black Control Spirit Bullets inside.

Following that, he spread open a piece of paper beside the altar and wrote:

"…Next, your mission is to seek out relatively high-level charms and Beyonder bullets. May God be with you.

“XXX who raised three requests from you.”

This letter was written to Patrick Bryan of the Numinous Episcopate’s Artificial Death faction.

With a subordinate at my disposal, why let him go to waste? As Klein mumbled, he folded his letter. At the altar from before, he summoned Patrick Bryan’s messenger.

The surface of the desk burst into pitch-black flames and quickly gathered together, forming a translucent bird with dark feathers.

This spirit world creature glanced at Klein before slowly lowering its head to bite at the envelope.

Watching it disappear, Klein nodded slightly and inwardly muttered, Patrick’s Contract Companion isn’t of a low level either…

He quickly reined in his thoughts, took out another letter, and fluidly wrote:

“…I have already obtained the blessing of Concealment. You can attempt to gather items at the Marauder pathway demigod level. In addition, I’ve found a way to crack the theft and replacement of destiny. You don’t have to be too anxious.

“…Do you know how to create a darkness that includes a temporary dream world?

“…If you have the time, can you head to Tingen and help me use 3-0782 to create Flaring Sun Bullets. The Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem has the divine blood of the Eternal Blazing Sun hidden in it… Only by sufficiently raising your strength can we be more confident at dealing with Amon’s avatars…”

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CHAPTER 994
PRELUDE

At 7 Pinster Street, Leonard, who had specially returned home to participate in the Tarot Gathering, was just about to head to Saint Samuel Cathedral's basement to read the dossiers so as to make preparations for his placating of souls at night when his vision suddenly went into a blur. He saw the messenger in a dark, full dress holding four blonde, red-eyed heads.

As a Soul Assurer, he could already see such creatures with Spirit Bodies.

After taking Klein's letter, Leonard didn't even have the chance to say thank you when Reinette Tinekerr turned around and walked into the void. She didn't even stay for long.

"…Old Man, why does Klein have a messenger of this level? Is this a perk of being a Blessed?" Leonard couldn't help but ask Pallez Zoroast with a suppressed voice.

He originally fantasized that it was standard for every Tarot Club member, but he later realized that he had been imagining things.

Pallez Zoroast's slightly-aged voice chuckled immediately.

"It is likely to solely belong to Klein Moretti. Everyone receives some special fortuitous encounter, isn't that the case? Isn't it the same even for a fellow like you?

"Heh heh, I thought you would use 'incomplete angel' to describe 'Her,' but you ended up using 'messenger of this level.' Not bad, you still remember my warning."

Leonard curled the corners of his lips, spread open the piece of paper, and read the content on it.

“He’s indeed the Blessed of Concealment and Fate…” Pallez Zoroast quickly scanned the heading through Leonard’s eyes.

Leonard didn’t look at the ground. Instead, he took a few steps back and threw himself into the embrace of the sofa before saying, “Klein can see through the theft and replacement of destiny… Then, we don’t need to rush to seek out items at the Marauder pathway demigod level.”

“Even if you were in a hurry, you have no idea where to seek them out,” Pallez scoffed.

Even for the gathering of the Hermits of Fate, similar items needed years to appear even once. And the next gathering was to happen at the end of the year.

Leonard was momentarily at a loss for words and could only cast his gaze at the last two paragraphs.

After a brief silence, he chuckled.

“I’ve always been curious as to where Klein received the high-level charm of the Sun domain when facing Megose. I thought it was provided to him by that Death Consul, but I couldn’t understand why a Death domain angel would be gathering high-level charms of the Sun domain. Wouldn’t that be suicide? Now, I finally understand.

“Old Man, I wielded 3-0782 before as well. Why didn’t you notice that there was a drop of the Eternal Blazing Sun’s divine blood hidden in that? If you could’ve stolen some of its power back then, things wouldn’t have…”

Leonard originally wanted to mock Old Man, but as he went on, he fell silent.

Pallez Zoroast sighed in his mind.

“If that drop of divine blood could be so easily discovered, that Mutated Sun Sacred Emblem wouldn’t have been in Tingen.”

Leonard fell silent for a few seconds before asking, “Then how am I to create an opportunity to get that Sacred Emblem to create the Flaring Sun Charm?”

Although Klein made it sound simple in his letter, Leonard knew that it wasn’t an easy task. This was because he wasn’t a Nighthawk of Tingen City. Even if he returned to visit his former colleagues and teammates, he had no authority to enter Chanis Gate.

Upon hearing his question, Pallez Zoroast replied in a peeved manner, “Why are you asking me something as trivial as this? Can’t you think for yourself?”

Leonard coughed uncomfortably as he began thinking seriously to seek out a solution.

“I’m currently working alone, but the archbishop has given me the authority to get the help of the local Nighthawks in the region of question.

“Hmm, if all the souls in Backlund have been placated, and if I haven’t finished digesting my potion, wouldn’t I have to do it at other dioceses?

“When that happens, if Tingen happens to have a paranormal accident, it will be very reasonable for me to return and get two Nighthawks and use 3-0782…”

After Leonard finished muttering to himself, Pallez Zoroast chuckled.

“Not bad. You came up with an idea so quickly.

“But have you thought about it? You are placating them, not purifying them. This is contradictory with obtaining 3-0782. It will easily incur suspicion.”

Leonard, who had been praised, immediately laughed.

“Old Man, that’s because you aren’t aware. Back when I joined the Nighthawks team, there was one line in the education I received: Only under the premise of having the ability to purify can placating achieve the best results.

“Emperor Roselle had also once said that to solve problems, you need a stick in one hand and a carrot in the other.”

Pallez Zoroast immediately tsked.

“Then follow your plan. Of course, that’s assuming that you can finish Anthony Stevenson’s missions in a week or two. If you haven’t obtained the Sun Flare Bullets before the actual operation of eliminating Amon begins, then it would no longer be necessary.”

Leonard recalled the list of missions written on the pieces of paper as his forehead twitched.

He then forced himself to forget about his worries and mumbled, “I wonder when the mission to punish the Sanguine will begin…

“I wonder if the Sanguine has a Sealed Artifact at the Marauder pathway’s demigod level. “Temporary dreamworld… I can create it myself. I’ll find a chance to make some charms, but can power at this level be able to resist the corrosion of the darkness in the Forsaken Land of the Gods?”

In an apartment in Cherwood Borough.

Fors took out a novel, sat on the sofa, and watched Xio walk towards the lobby as she wore her boots to head out.

Finally, Fors couldn’t hold back her puzzlement as she said, “There’s no rush. That gentleman said that he wouldn’t assign the mission that quickly.”

Xio shot her a glance and said, “I’m a bounty hunter. I have other missions.”

Upon saying that, she paused and said after some deliberation, “Fors, do you think that Miss Justice resembles Miss Audrey?”

Fors was taken aback for a few seconds before she snapped back to senses. She subconsciously waved her hand and chuckled.

“How is that possible…”

Just as she said that, the similarities began flashing through her mind, her eyes widening in response.

After a while, she whispered, “It’s not impossible.

“Spectator pathway, Psychology Alchemists, noble lady, blonde hair and green eyes… She’s the only noble I know that meets those criteria… Of course, I don’t know that many nobles. Furthermore, I have no idea if the ones I’m familiar with have anything to do with the Psychology Alchemists…”

Xio silently listened to her friend and said after some thought, “Fors, do you still remember the missions assigned to us by Miss Audrey? I originally thought that it was issued by Earl Hall, but on second thought, perhaps it came from the Tarot Gathering…

“Also, how did we know of Mr. Fool’s honorific name? Do you remember? It was from books we borrowed from Viscount Glaint! In the book cover was a strange ancient slip!”

Fors nodded in enlightenment.

“If we could discover it, as a good friend of Viscount Glaint, Miss Audrey, has a chance of discovering it as well! This can explain why she joined the gathering…”

“Yeah,” Xio agreed with Fors’s guess.

Fors opened her mouth and was just about to say something when she recalled that the matter with the Sanguine wasn’t completely over. She immediately looked around warily and said, “Xio, we should lessen our discussions of gatherings in the future.”

“As for Miss Audrey, we can visit her once every week or two. We can continue observing when the time comes.”

Xio snapped to her senses and nodded heavily.

“Alright!”

She then opened her door and went to a particular bar in East Borough and sat by the bar counter.

Rapping on the table, she said to the bartender who looked up, “Any new missions today?”

The bartender gave a rough list without mentioning any investigations of a particular Mr. Ernes Boyar.

Indeed, I’ll have to wait till tomorrow or the day after tomorrow… Xio looked around, retracted her gaze, and asked in puzzlement and concern, “I haven’t seen Sherman in a while. Do you know where he’s been?”

Sherman was a young man who thought himself as a woman-one of Xio’s informants.

The bartender chuckled.

“Perhaps he ran off with some man. You do know that he’s happy to do so if a man fancies him.”

“This isn’t something worth ostracizing him about,” Xio rebutted seriously, feeling a baffling sense of concern.

She then exerted strength in her palm and jumped off the high-stool, prepared to seek out Sherman in the places he was usually seen.

Backlund Bridge area, Iron Gate Street, Bravehearts Bar.

Holding down his hat, Emlyn pinched his nose as he passed through the crowd that exuded all kinds of smells before finding the red-eyed Ian in the card

room.

“Mr. White, what is it this time?” Ian smiled as he led Emlyn into an empty billiard room.

Emlyn took off his hat and quipped, “Something trivial. Help me put up a mission to the bounty hunters. The details of the mission is to track a man named Ernes Boyar. Figure out his daily activities. The bounty reward will be 100 pounds.”

“100 pounds?” Ian subconsciously asked.

For investigations like tracking, 100 pounds was quite a ridiculous reward. One had to know that if a bounty hunter was able to complete this mission on their own, they could rest for an entire year, even if they were supporting a family!

Emlyn nodded.

“The target is rather dangerous.”

After the discussion back with the Tarot Club, he had already thought it through. He believed that tracking Ernes Boyar was an easy mission. The Sanguine Viscount would definitely pretend as though he didn't notice anything and deliberately follow a fixed trajectory.

Therefore, this 100 pounds was in fact payment for Miss Judgment to take the risk of participating in this operation. Of course, to aid in the misdirection and concealment, it was almost certain that more than one bounty hunter would complete this mission, allowing them to earn different portions of the reward. All Emlyn could guarantee was that Miss Judgment would earn the most.

"I see." Coming to an understanding, Ian extended his hand. "Down payment, exact address, level of danger, looks and characteristics. It's best if you have a portrait."

Ernes Boyar then gave 30 pounds in cash and Ernes Boyar's portrait.

"Red eyes?" Ian flipped through the pieces of paper in his hand and couldn't help but blurt out.

"Yes." Emlyn nodded gently and looked around him. He suppressed his voice and said, "There's also something else. Help me seek out clues regarding the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund."

"…Rose School of Thought?" Ian was taken aback as he asked in puzzlement, as though he had never heard of the name.

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CHAPTER 995
“CONJOINED PERSON”

Emlyn glanced at lan, raised his hand to pinch his nose, and chuckled.

“It appears you don’t understand me. It’s okay. A more simple description is to gather information about foreigners that come from the Southern Continent, especially from the Star Highlands and the Paz River Valley.

“What information do you want exactly? There are plenty of pure-blooded people from the Southern Continent in Backlund. Those that you’ve mentioned are also common,” Ian calmly asked without flaring up due to the contempt he received.

Emlyn laughed.

“The ones that are a bit more abnormal. They do things in a fishy manner and seem to all be mysterious. You should understand what I’m getting

at.”

“There are definitely many people you describe. In Backlund, they are either servants, workers, or thieves-being part of gangs. As the latter will all meet your criteria of being abnormal, fishy, and mysterious.” Ian sincerely pointed out how unpragmatic Emlyn’s request was.

Emlyn was already prepared for this. With an unobvious smile, he nodded slightly.

“Then, give me all the information that meets those criteria. I’ll do the filtering. Oh, I’ll pay 50 pounds as down payment for this commission as

the standard fees for the early-stage investigations. The subsequent payment will be counted based on how much information of value is provided. Each one will cost 20 pounds."

"Who is the one to determine its worth?" Ian asked after a few seconds of thought.

For him, having a 50-pound income for preliminary work like this was enough for him to accept the job. It was more than enough to hire a dozen people or so to investigate the areas from East Borough to Cherwood Borough for half a month.

He didn't mind how much he could only from the 50 pounds, as there were many people here who relied on him for their survival. He needed to arrange jobs with payment for them to do from time to time; otherwise, he would never be able to be kept abreast with the latest developments.

Emlyn sized up Ian and scoffed.

"Of course it will be me. You should know how trustworthy I am."

"Detective Moriarty never told me that…" Ian mumbled and sighed. "Alright. Our last cooperation was still pretty good. I choose to trust you."

Emlyn nodded in satisfaction, took out his wallet, and counted another 50 pounds worth of notes.

During this process, Emlyn momentarily felt the pinch when he realized he only had 407 pounds in savings.

And now there's only 357 pounds… He looked away from the notes and handed the cash to Ian.

He didn't stay. Putting on his hat, he walked out of the billiard room and left the Bravehearts Bar.

On the street, Emlyn stopped pinching his nose and looked up at the flame-like clouds. His expression gradually fell heavy as he silently muttered, That Wraith from before isn't around… Where did it go?

Humph, Ian acted as though he had never heard of the Rose School of Thought, but his racing heartbeat had betrayed him…

Also, he actually didn't ask if Sherlock Moriarty is back in Backlund. He didn't even show any concern… Could it be that Sherlock has already returned to Backlund and that he has already met him?

Rorsted Archipelago, City of Generosity, Bayam.

In an area near the harbor, Admiral of Stars Cattleya had brought along Frank Lee, who had his sleeves rolled up which revealed his brown hair, to an area outside a house with gas wall lamps. They came to an empty corner and watched as a figure appeared out of the shadows.

It was Bloodless Heath Doyle who was in charge of monitoring Artisan Cielf. He was thin and his skin was so pale that it was transparent. He looked so frail that a gust of wind could topple him.

"Did anything strange happen recently?" Cattleya nudged the gold-rim glasses on her nose.

Heath Doyle tersely acknowledged.

"Three days after you left, a stranger visited Cielf. He stayed for about fifteen minutes. I didn't approach for fear of being discovered.

"Based on your instructions, I sent men to tail the stranger, but they lost his trail."

"What did that stranger look like?" Cattleya asked with a slight nod.

Heath Doyle took out a piece of raw beef from a leather pouch by his waist. The blood on it remained fresh, but it didn't show any signs of contamination. It appeared to be a pure piece of solid meat.

Right on the heels of that, this piece of beef melted in Heath Doyle's hand, dripping to the ground like water. They then squirmed like they had life, drawing a portrait.

"This is the effect I want!" Frank Lee's eyes shimmered as he watched this scene, expressing his intentions with excitement.

Under his gaze, Heath Doyle, had the intention to run, but he slightly slanted his body and pointed to the ground.

"Roughly like this."

At this moment, a blood portrait had already taken form. It was that of a man with a mustache, with facial features that resembled that of the Paz River Valley. His greatest characteristic was the three ear studs on both his ears.

"Golden ear studs, thin body, not much fat, very athletic," Heath Doyle added.

Cattleya retracted her gaze from the ground and asked, "And then?"

Heath Doyle tersely acknowledged.

"No one visited Cielf after that, other than his temporary servants and chef he hired. I got men to investigate them. They are clean.

"Cielf has an evening stroll at a fixed time every day. He will bring a prostitute home, allowing her to leave only at daybreak… I've been constantly tailing him, but I never discovered any contact with odd people."

“He has been acting very normally all this time?” Cattleya asked with a frown.

From her point of view, not having any abnormalities made it most abnormal!

After all, this involved Rose School of Thought members that believed in the Primordial Moon.

Heath Doyle nodded in affirmation.

“Yes.”

Cattleya turned her head to look at the building’s main door and said after some thought, “I actually planned on using Beyonder powers to infiltrate and bring Cielf under control in the fastest speed possible before taking him away to prevent any accidents. But from the looks of it, the best solution is to knock on the door.”

Unknown danger was what terrified people the most.

At the thought that he had been busy with his experiments recently and hadn’t done his duty as first mate, Frank Lee hurriedly said, “Captain, I’ll go with you.”

Cattleya took off her thick glasses and hung them by her waist of her black warlock robe before nodding.

“Okay.”

With that said, she left the shadowy corner and walked towards the main door of Cielf’s residence.

As she approached, she looked up at the crimson moon that could be seen penetrating through the clouds. She curled her fingers and tapped thrice on the door.

Before long, footsteps approached and the door creaked open.

Cielf didn't show any obvious changes from the previous time. He remained thin and dark. His eyes were somewhat puffy, and his brown eyes were trying hard to force a smile.

"Admiral, is there something this time?"

He stood by the door, blocking the gas wall lamp's light behind him. It made the area appear dark and gloomy, as though he was sinking into the shadows.

Cattleya stared at him for a few seconds before saying slowly, "I have a new idea. I plan on making you a part of my crew."

She stood there motionlessly without any intention of stepping inside.

Cielf's expression warped as his voice turned somewhat dark.

"Why?"

Cattleya's eyes seemed to freeze as she slowly said, "Because I'm a pirate."

Pirates didn't need reasons. They did whatever they did out of their own desires.

Cielf's facial muscles twitched as a smile suffused his eyes once again.

"I can be your sailor, but as an Artisan, I'll be of much greater use in a city."

"I agree," Cattleya destroyed his resistance. "But before then, I need you to spend some time on the Future to be partners with others."

Cielf's expression gradually turned cold as he replied in an ethereal voice, "I'm afraid I won't be able to control myself. I have a strong urge to procreate every day…"

“Strong urge to procreate?” Frank Lee’s eyes lit up as he asked, seemingly in confirmation.

Cielf was taken aback as he wasn’t sure whether to nod or shake his head.

Frank then looked at Cattleya and asked in excitement, “Captain, is he going to be my assistant for my experiments?

“I love this trait of his!”

Cattleya fell silent for a few seconds before nodding heavily.

“Yes.”

Frank immediately revealed a bright smile and offered his right hand to Artisan Cielf.

“Pleasure to meet you. Let me introduce myself. First mate of the Future, Frank Lee.”

Cielf’s expression returned to normal as he shook the man’s hand with puzzlement. Then, he said, “Am I really going to spend a short period of time on the Future?”

“I guarantee it with my reputation on the line,” Cattleya sincerely replied before inwardly adding, It wouldn’t take long before Her Majesty personally handles you…

“Alright. It’s not like I can beat you.” Cielf shrugged. “Please permit me to pack my personal belongings.”

He then took two steps back, turned around, and walked to the staircase at the end of the foyer.

As he walked, he suddenly paused and said in an ethereal tone to Cattleya and Frank Lee, “Today’s moonlight is as beautiful as it always has been,

isn’t it?”

Without receiving a reply, he proceeded forward and vanished from the staircase.

At this moment, Cattleya’s heavy expression became obvious.

After Cielf opened the door, she had already noticed an abnormality with her eyes.

In the past, Cielf’s Spirit Body was that of an ordinary human, but now, he was a conjoined person!

Under the illumination of the moonlight, this “conjoined person” was being nourished and was rapidly growing stronger.

This isn’t a problem I can resolve. I have to write to Her Majesty. Also, I mustn’t forget Gehrman Sparrow’s request for a meeting… Cattleya sighed silently as she subconsciously looked up.

High in the sky, a crimson moon remained bright and silent amidst the thin clouds.

Backlund, Hillston Backlund, East Balam Military Veterans Mess.

Dwayne Dantès and Macht got off their separate carriages and entered the lobby together.

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CHAPTER 996
CARD GAME

After entering the East Balam Military Veterans Mess, Klein handed his cane and hat to his valet, Enuni, only to see Colonel Calvin of the Loen Kingdom's Ministry of Defense wearing an army uniform, waiting at the foyer with a glass of red wine in hand.

This long-faced officer smiled as he raised his cup at Dwayne Dantès.

"Long time no see."

"It really has been a while." Klein smiled as he walked over.

Colonel Calvin immediately offered his right hand.

"Congratulations. You did pretty well. Everyone was very pleased."

"I was very pleased as well." Klein used a Loen-styled euphemism to express his pleasure in cooperating. He then shook hands with him.

Calvin retracted his arm and glanced at Macht before he said with a laughing sigh, "Back when you first introduced Dwayne, I was quite distrustful of your judgment, but now I understand how you're a Member of Parliament."

"Anyone who interacts with Dwayne can easily tell that he's an expert at this," Macht accepted the colonel's approbation with the same Loen-styled euphemism.

Calvin retracted his gaze, sipped some red wine, and smiled at Dwayne Dantès, asking in passing, “How much did you earn this time?

“Don’t worry, I won’t raise prices in the future because of it. I’m simply curious.”

“20,000 pounds in gold,” Klein gave the midpoint value as an answer.

In actual fact, he had earned 25,000 pounds, but after paying Miss Messenger 10,000 pounds for “Her” services, he had only earned 15,000 pounds.

Calvin nodded.

“Not bad. If you need to convert those gold bars into gold coins, I can introduce you to someone from an imperial mint factory.

“How was it? Did you notice anything abnormal around Maysanchez’s area?” Klein said directly without thinking, “Yes!

“There was a place called Revival Square under his control that was destroyed by lightning.”

“That, I’m aware of,” Calvin replied with a rather heavy expression.

But you probably do not know that the person before you was the one who created the lightning… Klein smiled and then said, “Also, Maysanchez seems to be maintaining a fragile balance among many factions, but in actual fact, he has already secretly aligned himself with a particular faction. Of course, I’m not exactly sure who it is.”

He had no intention of betraying the Church of the God of Knowledge and Wisdom. All he did was divulge a little to win the trust of the Loen military.

“The only thing that can be confirmed is that it isn’t us,” Calvin nodded and said with a deep look in his eyes.

“It’s unlikely to be Intis.” Klein helped him eliminate one of the wrong choices.

Calvin tersely acknowledged.

“That isn’t a bad thing either. The few factions surrounding Maysanchez are supported by Intis. If he wishes to expand, there’s no way he can circumvent them. When the time comes, perhaps we will have more arms sales on our hands.”

With that said, he offered a toast.

“Holy Lord of Storms, to riches for everyone.”

As believers of the Evernight Goddess, Klein and Macht smiled in response without giving a direct answer.

After taking another sip of red wine, Calvin pointed at the second floor.

“Dwayne, I brought you here today to play cards with a VIP. Texas Hold’em.”

“Which VIP?” Klein asked with piqued interest.

Calvin’s expression turned solemn as he said with an unobvious smile, “Admiral Amyrius. He has been given a post and is currently in charge of the Ministry of Defense.”

Admiral Amyrius… The admiral whose younger brother was stripped of his post as governor-general, had his mistress corrupted by the Mother Tree of Desire, and ended up losing his post as highest commander of the Central Sonia Sea’s navy? I’ve worked with him before and even pretended to be him for some time… Indeed, when it comes to a demigod, as long as they didn’t screw up too badly, and if they are willing to hold it in, they will always be able to step out of the nadir… Klein recalled everything that had happened at Oravi Island, turning wistful.

Towards Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt, he still felt some guilt towards him. Although most of what happened back then didn't have anything to do with him, his mistress's anomaly was ultimately a result of the Mother Tree of Desire's wish to control him.

"That is to say that our future cooperation requires His Excellency's approval?" Klein asked in enlightenment.

"That's how it is." Calvin nodded and pointed up the stairs. "Let's head on up."

When they arrived at the second floor, they stopped in front of a pair of dark red double doors. Calvin turned his head to glance at Dwayne Dantès.

"Your mission today is to lose money."

Lose money? Klein sized up Calvin as he curled the ends of his mouth.

"I'll try my best."

By the side, Macht said with a laugh, "There's actually no need to be too deliberate. Admiral Amyrius has excellent card-playing skills. It's almost impossible if you wish to win any money. Heh heh, I always lose. Sigh, I just hope I won't lose too much today. Otherwise, I wouldn't even dare to return home."

Klein nodded thoughtfully.

"I only brought 200 pounds in cash. Would that be enough?"

"Definitely not." Calvin chuckled. "I've already changed chips worth 1,000 pounds for you. Just remember to return it."

Loen's best lawyers only earn about 1,000 pounds a year on the surface… You bunch of profligates… Klein sized up Calvin again.

This colonel didn’t notice it as he knocked on the door.

After a while, the double door creaked open, revealing the scene inside.

It was a hall paved with thick, soft carpets. There wasn’t a lot of furniture, making it appear rather spacious.

In the middle of the hall was a card table that could accommodate more than ten people. Surrounding it were luxurious-styled high-back chairs.

By the sides of the hall were gold-plated cutlery, marble-carved sculptures, coffee tables with books and newspapers, and a series of leather sofas.

Klein looked over and saw Amyrius Rieveldt sitting at the seat of honor. This admiral didn’t look different from before. His black hair was neatly combed backward, with his blue eyes dark and profound. The corners of his lips drooped slightly, and his face was clean-shaven. He had an austere temperament, and he wore dark blue clothes with an epaulet. He was meticulous in every detail, appearing extremely serious.

When he swept his gaze, Klein found another “familiar person.”

He had thick but neat black brows with a short and hard crew-cut of the same color. He had dark blue eyes and a high nose-bridge with a bushy mustache spreading out from his mouth. He had a long face with accentuated outlines as well as callous curves.

He was MI9’s deputy director, Qonas Kilgor!

He was one of the targets for Klein’s return to Backlund. He was the middle man in the dealings between the Demoness Sect and a particular faction in the royal family. He was one of the accomplices of the Great Smog of Backlund!

This brigadier general had abnormally broad shoulders, making his white shirt and black vest abnormally tight. He was playing Texas Hold’em with

great focus.

There are two, no—three demigods at a card table. How can this even be played? Interesting… Klein sat down and began observing the others at the table.

During this process, an attendant delivered a huge stack of chips, worth a total of 1,000 pounds. In the first few rounds, Klein folded after looking at his cards. He acted very cautiously, acting as though he never called or raised unless he had good cards.

As for Admiral Amyrius, his style was the complete opposite of him. He was in no way conservative. He called almost every round, constantly raising in an extremely aggressive manner.

Every round that he was involved in seldom reached the point where everyone showed their cards. Most people failed to withstand such aggression and, with the admiral's domineering force, they would call a round or two before folding. At times, someone would attempt to call Amyrius Rieveldt's bluff, only to encounter four nines. The color in his face instantly drained as though he had been passed the death verdict by a judge.

Qonas Kilgor had a completely different style as well. He would occasionally lose a round, but the chips lost wouldn't be much, preventing him from having too great a loss. And in the next round after his loss, he would often be able to wipe out the person who won all his chips the previous round, forcing him to spend money to buy in again.

Is there a need? Why are you using powers to cheat when dealing with Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders or even ordinary people? Others might not be able to tell, but would I be fooled? One has the Arbiter pathway's dominance, and the other has the Baron of Corruption's Bribe… Klein looked at his Five of Hearts and Nine of Clubs as he shook his head indiscernibly.

He couldn’t help but consider which powers of a Seer pathway could provide him help if he wanted to cheat.

Turn all my opponents into marionettes? In that case, I can win as much as I want. I’m practically invincible, but it’s of no pragmatic value. It’s not like I’m planning for some deathmatch poker tournament…

Unfortunately, there aren’t any mosquitoes here. Otherwise, I can use their Spirit Body Threads and turn them into marionettes to help me check out their hole cards…

Faceless only allows me to change myself, not the cards…

Magician’s Illusion? The effects would likely be pretty good when playing with ordinary people or Low- and Mid-Sequence Beyonders. But there are two demigods here…

Use a Clown’s ability to swap cards? It’s useless. The dealing and shuffling of cards are done by the croupier…

As his thoughts raced, Klein realized that apparently only his powers as a Seer was of use here.

He threw out his two hole cards to indicate a fold before taking out a metal chip and allowing it to move between his fingers.

At this moment, Amyrius Rieveldt suddenly looked up at him and retracted his hands before pushing all his chips in.

Indeed… Klein nodded inwardly without a hint of surprise.

During his last cooperation, he knew that Admiral Amyrius was able to distinguish ordinary people from Beyonders from his “position.” He suspected that he could even determine a Beyonder’s level, or in other words their “position.”

However, Klein wasn’t too worried, because a Bizarro Sorcerer had concealment powers to a certain degree. This was also why he could converge the augmentation effect the gray fog had on him after he reached Sequence 4. This made him confident that Amyrius wouldn’t be able to determine his level. However, he didn’t attempt any corresponding interference, as he suspected that Amyrius was able to tell that he was a Beyonder.

Therefore, he decided to reveal a tiny problem, making it easy to be seen through and be grasped.

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CHAPTER 997
“GAMBLING GOD” DWAYNE

The core rules of Texas Hold’em were very simple. It was to use two hole cards and five community cards to form a hand with any five-card combination. Whoever had the biggest hand won. And the community cards were dealt in three phases. Three community cards to form “the flop” in the first phase, a fourth community card called “the turn” in the second phase, and a fifth community card called “the river” in the third phase. Each phase allowed players to fold, check, call, or raise. This continued until everyone was done or until one person didn’t fold.

Klein fiddled with the chip in his hand as he divined the existence of any lucky instances within the next few rounds. However, he was unable to tell which exact round it was. After all, it was only a quick and simple divination with average effects.

Using this method to play with ordinary people and Low-Sequence Beyonders wouldn’t be a problem as long as the correct strategy is used, but it’s definitely inadequate against demigods. It’s already quite a challenge to defeat a Mid-Sequence Beyonder… Must I close my eyes each round and do a complete dream divination? Heh heh, if that were the case, Dwayne Dantès might end up with the title “Sleeping Gambling God”…Klein sighed inwardly. He continued watching the round play out as he sat by the side. At present, he had already lost a big blind[1] and a small blind[2] when it was his turn.

At this moment, Klein noticed one point: The MI9 deputy director, Qonas Klein, had lost 20 pounds to Admiral Amyrius.

A successful Bribe… Admiral Amyrius should be able to tell that Qonas is using his powers as a Baron of Corruption, but he might not know that this MI9 deputy director is a demigod… The next round will be interesting… Hehe…

Klein jolted to attention as the new round began. He didn't check his hole cards when the croupier handed him two new ones. Instead, he placed the metal chip he was playing with in his hand onto his hole card, taking on the stance of not planning to look at them.

After two people folded, the stern and old-fashioned Amyrius Rieveldt casually took a look at his hole cards. After counting five pounds worth of chips, he threw it into the middle of the table, having raised the stakes without garnering any surprises.

Another person folded as Macht called. Right on the heels of that, Qonas Kilgor, who had an unyielding personality, raised the stakes, throwing out a total of 20 pounds.

Calvin confirmed his hole cards once again before calling After one last person folded, Dwayne Dantès didn't do an actual count. He grabbed a handful of chips and threw it out.

The croupier who was in charge of counting the chips glanced at it before precisely announcing Dwayne's action, "20 pounds. Call."

"I thought it would be 50 pounds. From the looks of it, I'm still not very used to these chips," the white-sideburned Dwayne Dantès with an outstanding temperament said with a laugh.

However, he didn't add on the additional 30 pounds.

At this moment, no one made a move. It was Amyrius Rieveldt's turn again.

This admiral didn't even glance at the remaining players. Picking up five ten-pound chips, he threw them out.

“Another raise.”

He didn’t show any perturbations in his emotions, acting as though he was ordering a cup of black tea. However, that indescribable sense of dominance and the act of repeatedly raising the stakes pre-flop made the mood at the table freeze.

Such situations often implied that Admiral Amyrius had excellent hole cards. Perhaps they were a pair of Aces or a pair of Kings, or an Ace and King.

Macht decided to fold. Qonas Kilgor rubbed his high nose bridge and glanced around with his dark blue eyes before saying, “Call.” Colonel Calvin confirmed his cards again. After ten seconds of hesitation, he chose to fold.

Dwayne Dantès touched the metal chip on his two hole cards and smiled.

“Call.”

After a round of expressing their intentions, there were only three players for the round. Then, the croupier flipped the three community cards in the middle of the table for the flop.

“2Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, 9❤, KSpade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3.”

The person who was up first was Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt. He leaned forward slightly and said in a domineering manner, “50 pounds.”

He had immediately raised the stakes to 50 pounds!

Macht, Calvin, and company, including those who weren’t in the game, felt stifled for some baffling reason.

“…” Qonas Kilgor trembled slightly, but he ultimately grabbed 50 pounds and threw it out.

Dwayne Dantès glanced at the deputy director of MI9. Completely unfazed by the pressure, he said with a smile, “Call.”

Upon hearing this, Calvin turned his head and nodded at Dwayne Dantès with his deep blue eyes that resembled a nighttime lake, indicating his approval.

From his point of view, Admiral Amyrius’s domineering stance didn’t affect a person who came to lose money. At this moment, the red-vested croupier revealed the fourth card—the turn.

“9Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3.”

There were three Spades, increasing the chances of a flush tremendously. However, Admiral Amyrius still didn’t hesitate. He calmly pushed a stack of chips.

“100 pounds.”

Qonas Kilgor’s fingers tapped on his hole cards, showing his lack of confidence. But ultimately, he choose to call.

Dwayne Dantès glanced at this deputy director once again and maintained his warm smile.

“Call.”

At this point in time, he had yet to see his hole cards, making Calvin somewhat worried. He believed that such an act was going overboard-a clear act of throwing money away. It wasn’t something Admiral Amyrius, who was relatively conservative, might find acceptable.

At this moment, the red-vested croupier revealed the final card—the river:

“2Club Suit on Apple iOS 13.3“

As such, the community cards took form:

“2Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, 9❤ , KSpade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, 9Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, 2Club Suit on Apple iOS 13.3

“200 pounds.” Admiral Amyrius pushed a pile of metal chips in with an extremely domineering attitude.

Qonas Kilgor took a deep breath before pushing two stacks of chips.

“500 pounds.”

This amount of money was half of his purported annual salary.

Is he trying to bluff? Calvin and Macht exchanged looks, believing that Brigadier General Kilgor had made it too obvious, making it easy to see through him.

One had to know that when playing Texas Hold’em, apart from doing risk management and probability calculations, it also involved psychological battles most of the time. Be it in terms of body language, expression, or the style used for raises, they made it easy to expose one’s hidden cards.

Of course, good players could also use these details to deliberately misdirect their opponents.

Dwayne Dantès sized up Qonas Kilgor before he laughed. Then, like the previous few times, he said, “Call.”

Amyrius raised his hands, prepared to push all his remaining chips, to pressure his opponents into folding.

At this moment, he suddenly paused. His deadpan expression wore a look of solemnity.

After a few seconds of silence, he calmly said, “Call.”

At this point, the hole cards could be revealed to compare each person's hand.

Admiral Amyrius flipped his card first. It was an ASpade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3 and 10Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3. It formed a flush with the 2Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, KSpade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3, and 9Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3. It was a rather high-ranking hand, with the only ones bigger than it being a full house, four of a kind, straight flush, and royal flush.

"It's your turn," Amyrius then urged Qonas.

Qonas first flipped open a single card-KDiamond Suit on Apple. It made two pairs with the K and 9 from the community cards.

Following that, he picked up his second hole card. At that moment, the remaining poker cards at the red-vested croupier's end blurred.

Pa!

The hole card was flipped open, revealing itself: "9Club Suit on Apple iOS 13.3!"

"What?" Macht and company exclaimed, hardly believing their eyes.

This meant that Qonas Kilgor had obtained a full house-nines over kings!

It was bigger than a flush!

"Sorry about that. Full house," Qonas looked at Amyrius and said with a smile.

Then, he turned to look at Dwayne Dantès.

"You can reveal your cards."

“I’m also very curious as to what my cards are.” Dwayne Dantès smiled. He picked up the metal chip that he had placed down on his cards and very casually flipped the two hole cards.

“Eh…”

“What?”

Calvin and company rubbed their eyes.

Dwayne Dantès’s hole cards were a very weak pair: “2❤ , 2Diamond Suit on Apple “

There happened to be a very small pair in the community cards: “2Spade Suit on Apple iOS 13.3 , 2Club Suit on Apple iOS 13.3“

They formed a four of a kind—the smallest rank when it came to four of a kind, but it was higher ranked than all the full houses!

“Praise the Lady!” Dwayne Dantès drew the crimson moon across his chest in pleasant surprise, looking as though he had never expected it.

“An interesting round.” Amyrius was taken aback for a moment before he gently clapped.

Qonas Kilgor gave Dwayne Dantès a deep look and said with a laughing sigh, “I never expected the final winner to be you.”

Klein wiped the smile from his face as he inwardly grumbled, It’s only right that I win over the two of you. On the one hand, Admiral Amyrius enjoys pressuring others and doesn’t really rely on his Beyonder powers to cheat. As for you, you placed your focus and Beyonder powers on Admiral Amyrius; thus, ignoring me. On the other hand, the one playing cards with you is actually named Winner Enuni.

Without even looking at his hole cards, it was obvious that he was relying solely on luck!

At the moment he placed his chip on the hole cards, Klein had already swapped positions with Enuni as they switched faces with each other!

Although Colonel Calvin had gotten him to deliberately lose 1,000 pounds, Klein decided to win a killing after he saw Qonas Kilgor.

This wasn't because he couldn't bear to part with the money; instead, his main motive was to garner the attention of this MI9 demigod. He wanted to get familiar with him and build relationships!

Only by doing this could Klein have an opportunity to obtain intelligence from Qonas Kilgor and even carry out an assault on him. After all, he was a demigod. To deal with him in Backlund required sufficient care and caution. He would rather give up an operation if he lacked the confidence to guarantee a kill or lure him away from Backlund. Otherwise, he was bound to expose himself, ending up being surrounded by demigods and even angels in Backlund.

In the subsequent rounds, Klein won and lost different rounds. In the end, not only did keep his 1,000 pounds in chips, but he had even won nearly an additional 1,000 pounds. During this process, Calvin had gestured to Dwayne Dantès to lose, but he was left stupefied by the latter's ridiculous good luck that left him undefeatable.

After the game came to an end, a person walked over to Dwayne Dantès with a smile—Qonas Kilgor.

[1] "big blind" is equal to the minimum bet.

[2] The "small blind" is normally half the big blind.

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CHAPTER 998
ESTABLISHING RELATIONS

With dark blue eyes, Qonas Kilgor, who had crew cut hair which was seldom seen among members of high society, held a cup of champagne as he walked up to Dwayne Dantès. He said with a smile, “You had great luck today. You also had plenty of courage.” 1

If he’s referring to me immediately folding after receiving a Bribe, with me rather losing a big blind, that’s not luck but knowledge… As for the other times, playing cards with all of you has pretty much drained all of Enuni’s recently accumulated good luck… Klein swirled the cup with pale golden alcohol in his hand and said with a laughing sigh, “For a person who doesn’t care about the outcome, there’s naturally nothing to fear.

“Heh heh, Praise the Lady!”

He was using a Loen-style euphemism to indicate that he was mainly here to lose money and that his good luck was all thanks to the blessings of a deity. It had nothing to do with himself.

Qonas hadn’t lost much tonight-approximately one to two hundred pounds. Although this was already a considerable amount when compared to his purported salary, to a brigadier general deputy director of MI9—a hidden demigod—his salary was the most trivial part of his income. Therefore, he didn’t mind it. He shook his head with a smile.

“Humans often have no way of seeing through the arrangement of fate.

“You are an interesting person. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

His final sentence was both a form of praise and also a part of the formalities. It indicated that their conversation was over.

However, Klein had “acted” all night to acquaint himself with this demigod of the Black Emperor pathway, so how could he give up? He first replied, “It’s my pleasure as well.” Then, he asked in a seemingly random manner, “Your Excellency, are you familiar with the manors in the Backlund suburbs? It’s best if they come with forests for hunting.”

According to the information Klein had received from Miss Justice, Qonas Kilgor didn’t enjoy holding banquets, balls, or saloons at his place. Neither did he accept invitations on such matters. It was unknown if it was a problem with his character or due to his job.

He had very simple hobbies. First, he enjoyed smoking cigars, especially Chieftain Cigars from East Balam’s Mikent-recognized as the best cigars in the world. Second, he enjoyed playing cards, especially Texas Hold’em. Third, he enjoyed hunting. He often headed to the Backlund suburbs during autumn and winter. He even headed to Awwa County or East Chester County for hunting.

Klein was already planning on buying a manor, an expenditure meant solely to integrate himself into high society. He hadn’t made any decisions yet, but after meeting Qonas Kilgor today, he suddenly added this request in a bid to garner his interest. When the time came, he could even invite this MI9 deputy director to hunt in the suburbs over an enjoyable weekend. He could then seek out an opportunity to take action.

Qonas Kilgor drank a mouthful of champagne and said after some thought, “I’ll help you take note of it. If there’s anything suitable, I’ll send someone over. Böklund Street, right? Yes, someone will inform you there.”

“Thank you very much,” Klein earnestly replied.

At the same time, he pitied his former valet, Richardson, who had now become an assistant butler. This young man who wished to better himself

recently went out early in the morning and returned late at night. He had been gathering information about manors in Backlund's suburbs, filtering out those that met the requirements and the ones which were on sale. He had been personally visiting them in a bid to list down options which were all flawless. He didn't wish for his employer to spot something he fancied only to find out that it wasn't for sale, or that the actual conditions were far worse what was described.

And after Klein suddenly changed his request, all the work that Richardson had done was undoubtedly made useless.

The all-evil "Party A" in contracts always changes their requirements and requests… Yes, after this is done. I'll get Taneja to raise his annual salary by 5 pounds. As an assistant butler, he should naturally earn more than his time as a valet… 5 pounds… It was gone in just one or two raises in today's game… Richardson's annual salary is only enough to play a few rounds of Texas Hold'em… Klein sighed inwardly when he sensed eyes looking at him.

He directly looked back and realized that it was Admiral Amyrius Rieveldt.

This old-fashioned and stern middle-aged man nodded gently and retracted his gaze. He had no intentions of communicating with Dwayne Dantès, nor did he get anyone to arrest this unaffiliated Beyonder. After all, he was considered a working partner of the military, and it wasn't rare for a merchant, an adventurer with wide connections, to be able to obtain a potion.

At this moment, Colonel Calvin and Member of Parliament Macht walked over to Dwayne Dantès with wine glasses in hand.

"What happened?" Calvin asked with an exasperated and suppressed voice.

As Dwayne Dantès had won nearly 1,000 pounds, he and Macht had to change their strategies to prevent Admiral Amyrius from losing any money.

They went from a tight strategy to an unrestrained one. They felt quite the pinch from losing several hundred pounds each.

As such, adding to everyone’s losses, Admiral Amyrius had won a total of nearly 300 pounds.

With regards to this, Klein spread his hands.

“I didn’t even look at my hole cards!” In between the lines, he meant that this was simply the blessings of some deity that controlled luck.

At the moment, the deities, angels, and secret existences who had authority in the fate domain included, but were not limited to, the Evernight Goddess, The Fool, Snake of Mercury Will Auceptin, Pallez Zoroast, Blasphemer Amon, and Snake of Fate Ouroboros.

“This is really such a vexing matter,” Macht said with a bitter smile while shaking his head. “Calvin and I don’t even dare to return home after what we’ve lost.”

They had roughly lost about half their purported annual income.

Dwayne Dantès, with grayed sideburns, revealed a surprised look.

“When did you guys lose?”

He then pointed at the pile of chips at his seat.

“I just happened to retain the 1,000 pounds I bought in at the beginning. The rest are yours, isn’t that so?” 1.

Calvin and Macht were taken aback as they exchanged looks. Then, they revealed smiles.

“We must’ve counted wrongly due to the anxiety.” Calvin gave an approving nod.

Klein laughed and immediately changed the topic. He then began looking at supper that was placed on the coffee table beside him.

City of Silver, in the spire of one of the twin towers.

Derrick Berg once again met the Chief of the six-member council, Colin Iliad.

“You said that you have something you would like to ask me about?” Colin, who had quite a number of old scars on his face, calmly asked the youth who wasn’t considered too tall.

Derrick bowed and replied frankly, “Yes, Your Excellency. In the advancement for Priest of Light, I need pure darkness, but once I do it, it will be extremely dangerous. I’m wondering if there are any solutions.”

Colin Iliad listened seriously before nodding.

“You have to confirm one point: Is it pure darkness, or darkness with zero light? These two concepts are very different.

“If it’s the latter, you can obtain that in the spire’s underground dungeons. You’ve been there for some time, so you should know what I’m talking about.”

Derrick had a deep fear for the spire’s dungeons because it was there that he first met Blasphemer Amon. Not only did he see the former captain of the expedition team, but he had even been parasitized. Unless it was necessary, he really didn’t wish to recall it.

At this moment, after receiving the chief’s reminder, he began to slowly jolt his memories. He discovered that, under the spire, although each cell was given candles, one would have to wait for the guards to deliver food and medicine and ask for more once they finished burning. This didn’t happen frequently, with it happening only thrice a day with the gaps in between being very long.

And in such an environment, phenomena like the appearance of monsters and the vanishing of humans never appeared.

Derrick recalled that he had been in darkness with zero light for some time without encountering any danger.

He pondered for a moment and hesitantly said, “The darkness with zero light at the bottom of the spire has external powers involved?”

It was this power that prevented the darkness from making people disappear or producing monsters? Colin Iliad looked at the two swords that were hung up in a cross-like fashion on the wall. He looked up and sighed.

“Yes, that’s why it’s called darkness with zero light, not pure darkness.”

Derrick frowned slightly as he tried to recall.

After a few seconds, he said without certainty, “If that’s the case, the darkness outside the spire’s basement isn’t pure darkness as well. In many historical records, the nights before the Dark Ages didn’t make people vanish or produce monsters. Now, the darkness must’ve undergone an abnormal change or had some other forces mixed into it to turn it dangerous.”

“Not bad. For you to make such connections shows that you’ve improved… Therefore, let me ask you again. Do you need pure darkness or darkness with zero light?” Colin’s light blue eyes revealed a hint of surprise.

This… Could it be that pure darkness only exists outside the Forsaken Land of the Gods? Derrick turned gloomy before he pumped himself up.

“Your Excellency, I’m not too sure either. I’ll take some time to confirm this.”

He believed that the experienced and strong Mr. Hanged Man, Mr. World, and the other members of the Tarot Club could give him a good solution.

Colin Iliad didn’t ask further as he said with a nod, “Go on then.

“Once you reach Sequence 5, even if you aren’t able to become a demigod for a long period of time, you will have the chance of wielding certain Sealed Artifacts.” 1

Backlund, Hillston Borough, Xio changed into a brown jacket and wore a cap, pretending to be a very ordinary short man.

She had officially taken the commission and had begun tailing and investing the gentleman named Ernes Boyar. There were also a few other bounty hunters who participated in this mission.

Ernes Boyar lifted his top hat and pointed his cane forward as he instructed the carriage driver, “To St. George Borough.”

It was southeast of Backlund, separated from East Borough by the Tussock River.

Once he got on his carriage and took his seat, Ernes sniffed. He looked out the window and suddenly grunted.

As a Sanguine Viscount, how could he not have discovered the clumsy bounty hunters’ tailing him?

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CHAPTER 999
INSTIGATION

When Ernes left on a carriage, the few bounty hunters hiding in the vicinity immediately appeared. Without being stingy about the costs involved, they immediately stopped any rental carriages that passed by. Some memorized the target carriage's traits and attempted to take shortcuts through the cramped, isolated paths to catch up to it. Others rode on the bikes they had prepared ahead of time, swerving through the crowds and carriages with their bells ringing. It was very easy for them to keep pace.

Among them, only Xio was completely composed. She remained in her spot, watching Ernes and her peers leave.

This transportation tool known as a bicycle is more useful than I imagined. It's no wonder so many bounty hunters have saved up to buy one. This can save expenses from taking carriages and save time walking… If one often has such tracking missions, then the money saved is enough to buy a brand new bike… The only problem is that this mode of transportation tool has very few models available. All of them have high seats… Xio was enticed.

At this moment, a tracked carriage drove over from the crossroads and stopped in front of her.

Xio happened to be at a station.

Glancing at the double-decker that stopped on the iron tracks, Xio took out a few pennies, walked over, and sat down by the window.

Such public carriages could seat nearly fifty people with its double decks. It wasn't too crowded, allowing Xio to easily observe the scenery outside.

However, she didn’t admire the scenery. Her mind was quickly outlining the exact appearance of her target: brown hair, red eyes, pronounced features, a nose bridge that was so high that it looked deformed, and an oil painting catalog in hand.

With her supernatural senses as a Sheriff, as well as the distance between them not being too great, Xio could vaguely grasp her target’s current location and predetermined destination.

Therefore, she remained very calm and even took off her cap while using the glass windows to tidy up her coarse and stubborn blonde hair.

After several stations, Xio suddenly got up when the public carriage came to a stop as she alighted.

This was the Backlund Bridge area. She had sensed that the target had already changed direction and was preparing to head towards the bridge.

Xio immediately went on foot, planning to enter another street at the bend up ahead to board the public carriage that headed for the south bank of the Tussock River.

She had good luck, with a public carriage driving over just as she arrived at the stop.

Xio silently exhaled and took out another batch of pennies she had prepared, her urge to buy a bike strengthened.

This tracked carriage was very crowded, but with her domineering aura as an Arbiter, she was able to easily pass through the crowd, head up to the upper deck, and find a seat.

The carriage moved slowly as Xio casually looked out the window when her gaze suddenly froze.

She saw Sherman who she hadn’t been able to find anywhere!

This young man who thought himself as a woman was carrying a paper bag with a few long loaves of bread and a stack of newspapers as he entered a narrow alley.

His brown shoulder-length hair had grown longer, and his gray-patterned trousers seemed tighter. 1

Although his figure disappeared almost as quickly as he appeared, making it impossible for the average person to notice, Xio, who was a Sheriff, easily made the necessary judgment.

Sherman stopped renting his place in East Borough and moved here? Seeing that Sherman was fine and that she was still tracking her target, she held back her urge to jump off the carriage to chase after him to ask him about his recent situation.

Sherman carried the paper bag with several long loaves of bread and a stack of papers as he passed through alleys and streets, making a huge detour before entering an apartment building. He followed the cramped stairs to the third story, took out a key, and opened the door to where he lived.

He seemed to possess some pretty good anti-tracking skills.

With a creak, the door opened as Sherman’s eyes lit up. He saw a lady wearing a black dress in front of him.

This lady had a sweet, supple face and an impeccable figure. Even while standing at the window and blocking out the sunlight, making herself become cloaked in the shadows, she seemed to be gilded, making her appear holy and beautiful.

“Why are you here?” Sherman stared at her in surprise but couldn’t help but size her up.

His unobvious Adam’s apple bobbed up and down as he swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

The next second, he turned his head and looked to the side as though he didn’t dare look at her head-on.

“Ma’am T-Trissy…” Sherman stammered a greeting.

Trissy slowly smiled as she allowed the poorly-lit room to appear to become brighter. Then, she asked with a teasing tone, “Why don’t you dare to look at me?”

“I-I don’t know. I-1 like men. W-why do I still have odd thoughts when looking at you…” Sherman continued looking at the ground to his side as he stammered an answer.

Trissy’s expression immediately turned mixed before smiling as though nothing had happened.

“Females can also appreciate the charm of beauty within their gender.”

She paused for a moment before saying, “I came here today because I have a mission for you. Your original progress has been very fast, leaving me very satisfied. But it seems like it has recently stopped.”

Sherman’s face immediately wore a look of horror as he subconsciously took a step back.

“I-I don’t think there’s a need to do such things…”

Seeing Trissy silent, Sherman’s gradually eloquently stringed his words.

“I really don’t wish to instigate others into stealing, robbing, and murdering. That’s too evil, too despicable!

“Even at the very beginning, those people you got me to assassinate seemed to be a little overboard. Although they had indeed cursed me, beat me, ostracized me, and spread bad rumors about me, using all kinds of means to

harm me in exchange for joy, their actions didn't require them to pay with their lives."

Unsurprised, Trissy smiled and said, "That's not what you said back then. You hated them and had wicked feelings for them. Once you obtained Beyonder powers, you were so eager to seek revenge on them. I just made a tiny suggestion, and you planned several assassination missions. I always remember how you looked-stained with blood, trembling in excitement and fervor."

Sherman couldn't help but retreat as he heard that until he was stopped by the door which had closed at some point in time. He then covered his face with his hands, shouting, "No!

"I have nightmares every night, dreaming of them surrounding me, covered in blood. They chase after me, bite me…"

Pa! The paper bag fell to the ground as the long loaves of bread were scattered. The stack of newspapers happened to drop just beside them.

"This is very normal." Trissy cut off Sherman. "This is a necessary psychological change for an Assassin. Think about it. Didn't you wish to kill them when they were bullying you?"

"…Yes," Sherman answered hesitantly.

Trissy then chuckled.

"Just treat it as self-defense when being bullied; thus, killing them."

Her speech had a natural allure that made one wish to listen and believe. Sherman rapidly calmed down and nodded.

"From this point of view, it does seem much better…"

Upon hearing that, Trissy's dimples appeared as she teasingly added, "Besides, they weren't your match when they were alive, so what's there to be afraid of when they're dead?

"Even if they become ghosts or specters, it's nothing. You just need to seriously complete the ritual and consume one more potion, and then you'll be able to burn all those souls to oblivion!"

"B-but I can't bear seeing people turn ugly, crazy, and evil under my acts of instigation." Sherman still seemed rather unwilling.

Trissy indiscernibly curled the ends of her lips as she said with her smile maintained, "Those are evil thoughts they had to begin with. It has nothing to do with you. Even without you, those evil thoughts will erupt at specific moments and situations.

"Also, the missions I arranged for you are all related to the gangs. Aren't you most aware of what those people are like? Getting them to fracture and kill one another is mercy and kindness for people like you and the innocent people of East Borough."

Sherman subconsciously widened his mouth, swallowing the words he was just about to say.

He instantly fell silent.

Trissy's eyes swept past him and continued with a soothing voice, "You're just one step away from your target. As long as you complete the remaining ritual, you can drink the third potion to completely become a woman.

"When that happens, you can use the name Shermane that you've already picked for yourself. What a nice sounding name it is, isn't it? Then, you can leave Backlund as a woman, heading for Midseashire or Desi Bay where you can begin a brand new life. You will no longer have anything to do with this place. Yes, you will definitely be filled with charm. Many excellent men will court you, and you can choose the one you like the most and are

most satisfied with, walking down the aisle in a cathedral. You will have bubbly kids, and you can bring them up to be healthy children. You can bring them to Winter County for skiing, Desi Bay for holidays, and to the hunting grounds which are pleasures that only nobles have…

“Didn’t you say that you were willing to do anything to regain your true self?”

Sherman’s lips quivered, and after pursing them tightly for a while, he separated them and said, “Ma’am Trissy, I understand. I-I will proceed according to your instructions.”

After saying that, he seemed to lose all his strength as he stumbled to the ground. He subconsciously reached out to hold onto a coat rack beside him.

During this process, his gaze happened to sweep past the stack of newspapers.

It had already spread apart, revealing a particular report:

“…Tycoon from Desi, Mr. Dwayne Dantès, shows interest in purchasing the Larryway Steel Company, believing that it has excellent profitability and a promising future…”

…

“Sir, are you really planning on buying Larryway Steel Company?” Enuni asked while walking upstairs at 160 Böklund Street.

Dwayne Dantès shook his head and smiled.

“That news is just pure fabrication. I’ve only met the owner of the Larryway Steel Company, Mr. Phil La Rivie, at a ball last week and had a chat.”

By the side, Butler Walter heaved a sigh of relief as he warned, “Sir, the Larryway Steel Company is indeed seeking a buyer. There are quite a number of people who are considering the option.”

That also means that this piece of news was released by the reporters under Phil’s instructions so that he can sell it at a better price? Klein nodded in thought. He entered the room with the half balcony and prepared to head up above the gray fog. He wanted to use Enuni’s praying point of light to see any abnormalities at Hazel’s place.

This was something that he had been doing daily for the past few days.

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CHAPTER 1000
PRELUDE

In the grand palace above the gray fog.

Through Enuni's prayer point of light, Klein saw the scene inside his valet's room.

As his vision pulled out and slowly extended out, he began taking in all of Böklund Street. Among buildings covered in fresh flowers and grass, Intis parasol trees that shielded the sunlight slowly swept past. There were slow-moving carriages that were elegantly or beautifully adorned, and youths dashing quickly on bikes.

Finally, Klein locked onto Unit 39– Member of Parliament Macht's residence. He then lowered his field of view and began observing every animal and human to see if there was any black-haired, black-eyed, monocle-wearing man.

Phew… There's no switching or grafting of fate… Nearly ten minutes later, Klein heaved a sigh of relief.

At this moment, a carriage drove into Macht's residence and stopped at their doorstep.

A young lady with curly black-green hair and bright, dark-brown eyes alighted from a carriage. It was none other than Hazel who had returned

home.

She was wearing a dark green dress that didn’t expose her shoulders. Her lips were slightly pursed, and she wore a relaxed look with a hint of joy.

Upon seeing Hazel in such a state, Klein’s heart skipped a beat.

This was definitely abnormal!

From Klein’s point of view, the rat demigod had only two outcomes after meeting Amon’s avatar. She either had a trump card and managed to escape successfully at the cost of being heavily injured, or she had turned into a Beyonder characteristic to strengthen Amon’s avatar. And regardless of the outcome, there was no way Hazel could find her teacher. She would definitely be in grief and pain, feeling dispirited and sad. So how could she be relaxed and happy?

With her taking the risk to head to the manor in the suburbs to inform her teacher, she’s not a cold and selfish person… Her present state indicates that she has confirmed that her teacher, that rat demigod, is fine. She has even been rewarded, perhaps obtaining all kinds of knowledge about the supernatural world… This is in conflict with my theory of the rat demigod’s outcome. No, it’s not in conflict. Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth… Klein leaned back into his seat and came to a conclusion:

Amon had not only obtained the rat demigod’s Beyonder characteristic, but he had also stolen her fate and had replaced her identity!

Therefore, to Hazel, her teacher hadn’t encountered any mishaps and would only need a period of time to lie low… After making the confirmation, Klein silently exhaled and felt a little relaxed.

To him, the most terrifying aspect of Amon was that no one knew what form or identity “He” would use to appear. It could be possible that Member of Parliament Macht would one day wear a monocle, or that insects in the garden would turn around with monocles on their faces.

Therefore, after grasping the identity Amon might use to appear, Klein couldn't help but feel more assured.

As for Amon's performance being problematic in front of Hazel, Klein believed that it was impossible. After all, Amon was a King of Angels that was fundamentally good at deceit. Even if "He" mentioned something that differed from what the rat demigod had said, "He" could easily use the excuse of it being a test with what "He" now said being part of her formal education to fool her.

Of course, based on Pallez Zoroast's depiction, Amon definitely wouldn't appear as a rat demigod, so I shouldn't be careless… Klein did some observations before retracting his gaze and leaving the gray fog.

Inside his room, he sat on a reclining chair and drank some black tea with a lemon slice. He half-closed his eyes and considered how he could deepen his relationship with Qonas Kilgor.

After an unknown period of time, Klein suddenly opened his eyes and activated his Spirit Vision.

At the demigod level, he could already activate it at will.

Almost at the same moment, Reinette Tinekerr walked out of the void with the four blonde, red-eyed heads in hand. One of them had a letter in its mouth.

"Who's letter is it?" Klein asked as he reached out his right hand.

"Sharron…" Reinette Tinekerr's other head answered.

Miss Sharron? She should be making her final preparations for the advancement. Why would she suddenly write to me? Klein was slightly puzzled as he received the envelope.

After he opened it, he found very little content. There was only a simple line:

“Emlyn White is seeking out the Rose School of Thought.”

Emlyn is seeking out the Rose School of Thought? Klein pricked up his brows in surprise.

His opinion of Emlyn was a Sanguine who was afraid of trouble. Unless necessary, he didn’t even wish to head out. So how could he actively search for the Rose School of Thought?

This definitely isn’t Emlyn’s own will… Yes, Emlyn had mentioned that some important figure of the Sanguine was meeting him… This is a new mission that the Sanguine gave him? It’s very possible! However, why didn’t he mention it in the Tarot Club? Oh, it was focused on the punishment operation, and he had other clues, so he temporarily kept it from us? Klein thought as he leaned forward. Under the watch of Miss Messenger’s eight eyes, he took out a piece of paper and a fountain pen from his coffee table.

He wasn’t curious about Emlyn’s clues, because it was an obvious matter.

Since Miss Sharron knew that Emlyn was seeking out the Rose School of Thought and had asked their mutual friend, Detective Sherlock Moriarty, about this matter, it meant that this Sanguine had likely asked the help of the black market arms dealer, Ian, from the Bravehearts Bar.

This also meant that, in Emlyn’s previous commissions, he must’ve noticed Sharron or Maric; otherwise, it was impossible for him to mention the Rose School of Thought to an ordinary person.

I don’t know enough about the Apothecary pathway. I can’t determine how Emlyn discovered a Wraith or Zombie… Klein crossed his right leg as he placed the letter on his thigh and began scribbling:

“This is likely a mission the Sanguine’s upper echelons gave Emlyn. They hate the Rose School of Thought members who believe in the Primordial Moon, and they have directed this anger at the other factions of the Rose School of Thought…”

Upon writing this, Klein paused and added, “I suspect that the Mother Tree of Desire has the intention of encroaching onto the authority of the Moon domain, but I’m unsure why the Primordial Moon believers would join the Rose School of Thought. This secret existence seems to have a very complicated relationship with the Mother Tree of Desire. They are at odds, but they have also cooperated. It’s hard to tell…”

Putting down his pen and folding the letter, Klein looked at Miss Messenger who had been waiting. He asked with a chortle, “How did you know that I’ll be replying?”

One of Reinette Tinekerr’s heads succinctly answered, “Inkling…”

Right on the heels of that, the four blonde, red-eyed heads spoke one after another, “You…” “Seem a…” Little livelier…” “Recently…”

“Your expression…” “Has also…” “Become much…” “Richer…”

As Klein pulled out the box that was connected to his golden pocket watch, he took out a gold coin from it and said with a self-deprecating smile, “Repeatedly wearing a thick mask isn’t good for one’s mental health. I realized that after becoming a demigod.”

Therefore, unless he was in situations where he needed to disguise or hide his feelings, he limited the use of his Clown’s power to control his emotions.

Reinette Tinekerr didn’t say a word as the heads bit on the gold coin and letter before vanishing.

Watching Miss Messenger leave, Klein leaned back slightly and inwardly muttered,

I wonder if Miss Sharron and Maric will use the Sanguine to deal with the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund…

Miss Sharron is probably focusing her time and efforts on her advancement. She might not involve herself, but I can't be sure about Maric…

Emlyn changed into his Church of Earth Mother priest robes, and then wore a red coat and a silk hat before walking out the Harvest Church. He then got into a rental carriage by the roadside.

After saying his destination, he casually cast his gaze out the window.

At this moment, Emlyn sensed something as he abruptly moved his body, leaving shadowy afterimages in his wake as he moved to the side.

Then, he saw a figure appear out of nowhere.

It was a young man whose coat wasn't buttoned, revealing the white shirt and black vest within. His brown hair was a little moist and messy as though he hadn't combed it in a while. His brown eyes were filled with temperance, as though he was restraining certain urges deep within his heart.

Upon seeing this pale corpse-like face, Emlyn tipped his chin and said with a smile, showing no signs of nervousness, "You have finally come."

"Aren't you afraid that I'm a member of the Rose School of Thought that's here to finish you off?" The young man's figure turned somewhat transparent.

Emlyn scoffed and said, "Would I not be aware of the Rose School of Thought's history? Or matters about the betrayal of the temperance faction and their escape?

“Well, how do I address you?”

“Maric,” the young man replied. “Is this the information you received from the upper echelons of the Sanguine?”

Emlyn was taken aback as he tsked.

“You are smarter than I thought.”

He used such a remark to confirm the other party’s guess.

Maric slowly drew a breath and leaned forward slightly.

“How did you notice our existence from Ian’s side?”

Emlyn leisurely leaned back into the carriage and said with a smile, “Humans have the smell of humans. Wraiths have the smell of wraiths.”

Maric fell silent for a few seconds before asking, “You Sanguine wish to deal with the Rose School of Thought members in Backlund?”

“The important members,” Emlyn replied by making an emphasis.

“If that’s the case, we can use ourselves as bait to help you fish out the Rose School of Thought members. However, I need confirmation.” Maric rubbed his eyes and said directly, “I know you are unable to make the decision. You can first return to seek permission from the Sanguine. After you obtain their assurance, you know where to find us.”

Having said that, he handed a dossier in his hand.

“This is from Ian. It’s the initial feedback from tracking Ernes Boyar. Many bounty hunters have completed this together.”

Emlyn received the dossier and nodded in a rare look of solemnity.

“Okay.”

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